

FoodShare and Health Care  
Customer Satisfaction Survey

**Final Report**

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**Submitted to:**

**The Wisconsin Department of Health  
and Family Services**

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# FoodShare and Health Care Satisfaction Survey: Executive Summary

## I. Introduction

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) requested the development and administration of a state-wide customer satisfaction survey that would assess satisfaction with the initial application process for FoodShare (formerly called food stamps) and Medicaid programs (i.e., Healthy Start, BadgerCare, MAPP, AFDC Medicaid, MA/Title 19). The goal of the survey was to provide the state with baseline customer service data to effectively evaluate local program administration and formulate effective program improvements to maximize customer satisfaction, payment accuracy, program participation and reductions in local agency workload.

DHFS identified four main areas to be addressed. These are:

1. Are customers treated with respect when contacting and working with the agency, and are they comfortable talking to agency workers?
2. Do the customers receive enough information to make well-informed decisions concerning their participation in the program(s)?
3. Are the decisions made by the agency explained clearly to the customer and delivered in a timely manner?
4. Are customers advised of their rights and responsibilities with respect to the programs they receive?

These four questions reflect the main components of customer satisfaction in which the State was interested in surveying. With these objectives in mind, APS Healthcare (APS) worked with DHFS to determine the appropriate survey methodology, sample size, and survey instrument to maximize the value of the data received. This section provides a summary of findings.

## II. Methodology

Local agencies were grouped into five categories according to size of caseload: extra small; small; medium; large; and extra large, which consisted solely of Milwaukee county applicants. Surveys were sent to a sample of applicants from each of these five agency size categories. About 32% of those sampled (i.e., were sent a survey) returned a completed survey. Survey results were then used to compare agencies based on caseload size.

## III. Themes

In analyzing survey responses, several themes emerged. Summaries of these themes are listed below:

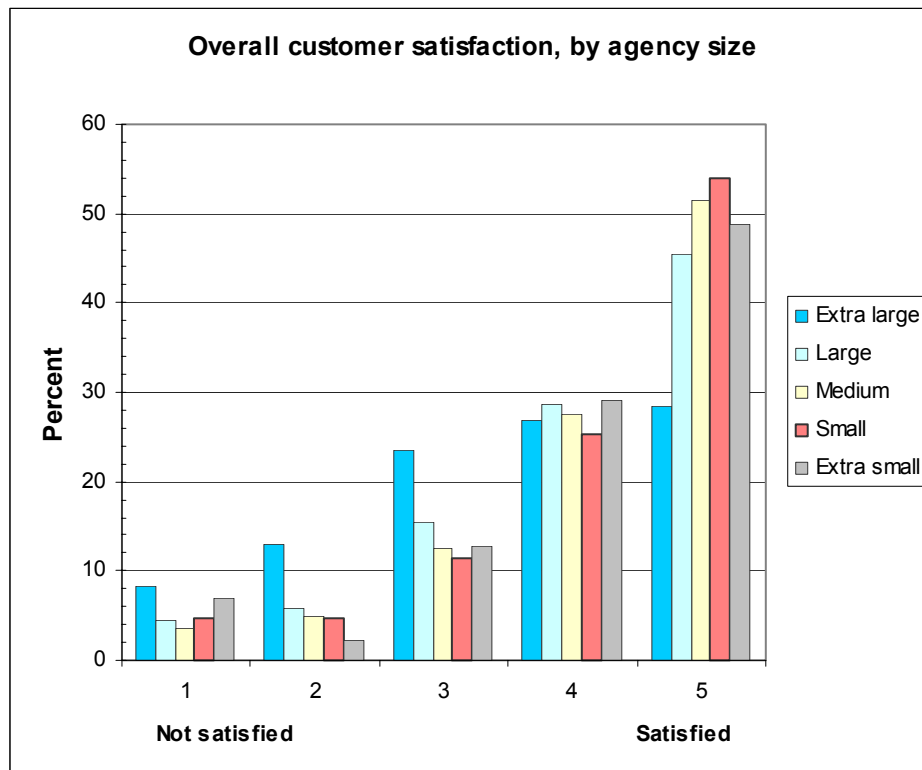
## 1. Respect and overall satisfaction

The majority of respondents (92.1%) – regardless of agency size – felt that they were treated with respect by staff at their local agency; however, respondents in the extra large group were less likely to report that they were treated respectfully.

Additionally, around 75% of all respondents rated their overall satisfaction a 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being unsatisfied, 10 being satisfied). About 12% rated their overall satisfaction a 4 or lower. Respondents in the extra large category were less likely to be very satisfied than respondents from each of the other four agency size categories. There were no major differences in overall satisfaction between these other agency size categories.

About 13% of all respondents said that at some point they wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager. Respondents in the extra large category were more likely to say this than respondents from the four smaller agency sizes, among which there were no differences. Respondents who wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager were asked to provide an explanation. The top three reasons given for wanting to talk to a supervisor or manager were: phone calls not being returned; respondents needing more information regarding benefits; and respondents needing more information regarding decisions.

The chart below shows the level of overall satisfaction within each of the five agency size categories:



## **2. Comfort**

The majority of respondents (86%) felt comfortable visiting their local agency. Of all respondents, about 3% indicated they were very uncomfortable visiting the local agency. Although there are no differences in comfort among extra small, small, medium and large agencies, fewer respondents in the extra large category said they were very comfortable than respondents in other agency size categories.

Of all survey respondents, 78% said they felt comfortable talking on the phone with local agency workers. Similar to in-person comfort, there were no differences in phone comfort between the smaller four agency size categories, but fewer respondents in the extra large category said they were very comfortable. Respondents from the extra large category were also far more likely to have never spoken on the phone with an agency worker.

## **3. Timeliness**

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents said they were seen at their local agency in 30 minutes or less, while about 10% claimed to have waited an hour or more. Although no differences in wait times were seen between small, medium and large agencies, respondents in the extra large category had longer wait times and respondents from extra small agencies had shorter wait times.

Approximately 40% of all respondents said it took less than one week to receive a decision regarding their benefit application(s), and about 16% said it took longer than three weeks. There were no differences in wait times between the smaller four agency sizes. Respondents from the extra large category had a slightly higher than average percentage of respondents indicate they received notice of a decision in less than a week, but twice the average percentage of respondents who indicated it took more than four weeks.<sup>1</sup>

Unreturned phone calls are a problem experienced by respondents from all agency size categories. Almost one-quarter of all respondents thought that phone calls, on average, were not returned promptly. Respondents in the extra large category were more likely to disagree that phone calls were returned promptly, and were also more likely to indicate that they had never left a message. This may in part reflect a difficulty in navigating the phone system to an agency worker's voicemail, which was a frequently cited complaint in the open-ended portion of the survey.

Looking at all agency sizes, two-thirds of phone calls are returned either the same day or the next day. About 5% said phone calls were returned, on average, more than a week later, and over 8% of all respondents said phone calls were never returned. A far higher percentage of respondents from the extra large agency indicated that phone calls were never returned as compared to other agency sizes. There was a clear trend seen: as agency size decreases, phone calls were more likely to be returned the same day.

## **4. Explanation of benefits, decisions, rights and responsibilities**

Four questions addressed the level of satisfaction with the amount and clarity of information provided by agency workers. Although the majority of respondents indicated that information was

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<sup>1</sup> By law, notification must be made in 30 days.

explained clearly, the open-ended portion of the survey revealed a significant percentage of people who did not feel benefits were explained clearly.

Just over three-quarters of all respondents said that local agency workers clearly explained FoodShare and Medicaid benefits that were available to them. Responses from the four smaller sized agencies were similar, while those from the extra large agency were more likely to disagree that benefit availability was explained adequately.

Almost 85% of all respondents agreed that local agency workers explained what respondents needed to do to get benefits. About 11% did not agree that this area was explained clearly. There were no differences found between the four smaller agency sizes, but respondents from the extra large agency were less likely than average to agree that this area was explained clearly.

Almost 85% of all respondents agreed that written information provided by local agency workers was easy to understand, with about 8% disagreeing. The remaining respondents indicated that they had not received any written information. While respondents from the extra large agency were less likely to “strongly agree” that written information was easy to understand, they were about as likely to “agree” than respondents from each of the other agency size categories. It is unsurprising that each of the five agency sizes look very similar. This question does not involve the assessment of an agency worker’s performance, which might be expected to vary by agency size; rather, it involves the assessment of written material, which presumably should be more or less the same regardless of agency.

About 60% of all respondents agreed that the agency workers clearly explained the fair hearing process, a percentage that is considerably lower than the percentage who thought benefit availability and recipient responsibilities were explained clearly. Almost 12% of all respondents disagreed that this was explained clearly. Most salient are the 21% who indicated that they were unsure if they heard about the fair hearing process. Although respondents from the four smaller sized agency categories did not differ in their responses, respondents in the extra large category were less likely to “strongly agree” that fair hearings were clearly explained and more likely to “strongly disagree.”

Qualitative data gleaned from open-ended questions show that a substantial portion of comments relate to lack of clear information, particularly about benefit availability.

## **5. Flexibility**

Although most respondents did not require a meeting outside of regular business hours, a substantial portion of those who did require this type of flexibility found it difficult to obtain. About one in five respondents indicated that they needed to meet with an agency worker outside of regular business hours. Of these individuals, 37% experienced some level of difficulty arranging a meeting with an agency worker.

## 6. Open-ended responses

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments about their experience going to their local agency for services. Over half (54%) of all comments provided were positive, and the most frequently made comment (23%) was that staff were helpful. The second most frequently made type of comment was that the respondent was satisfied with his or her experience, and the third most frequently made type of comment was a disagreement with a decision or program requirement. Please see Chart 19. on page 49 for a more detailed look at the various types of comments that were provided.

In addition to comments, respondents were also asked to provide any suggestions they might have to improve customer service at their local agency. The most frequently made type of suggestion (24%) was for local agency staff to be more polite, respectful and/or friendly when talking to applicants. The second most frequently made type of suggestion (17%) was to answer and return phone calls more quickly. “Other” suggestions made up the third greatest percentage of suggestions. This category served as a catch-all for suggestions that did not fit into any of the other categories. Please see Chart 20. on page 51 for a more detailed look at the various types of suggestions that were provided.

# FoodShare and Health Care Satisfaction Survey: Report

## I. Introduction

One of the primary goals of the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) is a high rate of customer satisfaction within the programs they administer. In addition, DHFS views customer satisfaction as essential as other goals of payment accuracy, increased program participation of eligible persons and reducing local agency workload are pursued.

DHFS requested the development and administration of a state-wide customer satisfaction survey that would assess satisfaction with the initial application process for FoodShare (formerly called food stamps) and Medicaid programs (i.e., Healthy Start, BadgerCare, MAPP, AFDC Medicaid, MA/Title 19). The goal of the survey was to provide the state with baseline customer service data to effectively evaluate local program administration and formulate effective program improvements to maximize customer satisfaction, payment accuracy, program participation and reductions in local agency workload.

DHFS identified four main areas to be addressed. These are:

1. Are customers treated with respect when contacting and working with the agency, and are they comfortable talking to agency workers?
2. Do the customers receive enough information to make well-informed decisions concerning their participation in the program(s)?
3. Are the decisions made by the agency explained clearly to the customer and delivered in a timely manner?
4. Are customers advised of their rights and responsibilities with respect to the programs they receive?

These four areas reflect the main components of customer satisfaction in which the State was interested in surveying. In addition to respect, comfort and timeliness, the State also values clarity in the delivery of program information and decision making. With these objectives in mind, APS Healthcare (APS) worked with DHFS to determine the appropriate survey methodology, sample size, and survey instrument to maximize the value of the data received. APS was responsible for data collection, the creation of a database for survey data, entry of data from returned surveys into that database, and analysis of data and drafting of a report with recommendations. The following sections will discuss the approach toward developing the survey methodology.



## II. Methodology

### Sampling

The main objective of the survey was to determine the level of satisfaction with the initial application process. To avoid problems with respondents' recall, it was essential to capture potential respondents as close to their date of application as possible. Using data from the Client Assistance for Re-employment and Economic Support (CARES) system, a population of FoodShare and Medicaid recipients was assembled which met the following criteria:

- Recipient applied for Medicaid, FoodShare or both at any time in the six month window between December 1, 2005 and May 31, 2006
- Recipient applied as casehead (the casehead is typically the head of the household for a group of recipients, such as a parent or legal guardian and children.)
- Application was approved. (Although ineligible applicants were of interest as well, the outcome of the application process –approval or denial– would inevitably have confounded results as this powerful variable is likely to affect how one views his or her application process.)
- Recipient age 18 or older
- Recipient did not list local agency as home address. Recipients who cited any county/tribal agency as their address were excluded, as it was unlikely that the applicant would receive the survey.

It was hypothesized that customer satisfaction is related to the size of the agency visited, due to a number of factors (e.g., higher customer-to-staff ratios at larger agencies). Therefore, each of the 79 local agencies (i.e., 72 county + 7 tribal social or human services agencies) was categorized into one of five groups, according to size of caseload:

1. Extra large (XL): caseload over 20,000 assistance groups (i.e, Milwaukee)
2. Large (L): caseload between 10,000 and 20,000 assistance groups
3. Medium (M): caseload between 3,000 and 10,000 assistance groups
4. Small (S): caseload between 500 and 3,000 assistance groups
5. Extra small (XS): caseload less than 500 assistance groups

The number of completed surveys required to obtain the power to detect statistically significant relationships and differences depends on the population of each category (e.g., the number of Medicaid or FoodShare individuals who applied at medium-sized agencies from December 2005 to May 2006). An adequate number of completed surveys is also required to generalize results beyond this study with acceptable statistical confidence. Based on the population within each category, and assuming a target response rate of 25%, the following numbers of completed surveys were required:

**Table i.** Number of completed surveys required, by agency size

Agency size	Medicaid or FoodShare new applicants (12/05-05/06)	Number completed surveys required	Number sampled
XL	15,941	375	1,497
L	12,831	373	1,492
M	19,186	376	1,503
S	11,866	372	1,486
XS	328	177	328
		<b>1,673</b>	<b>6,306</b>

Thus, in order to make comparisons of customer satisfaction on the basis of agency size, 1,673 completed surveys were needed. To achieve this total, two waves of surveys were mailed. During the first wave, 6,306 surveys were mailed. A second wave of 4,996 surveys was sent out a few weeks later to those applicants who had not responded to the first survey, and who did not have their survey returned to sender due to a bad address. Therefore, 11,302 surveys were mailed in total.

To help ensure an adequate response rate, two \$50 grocery vouchers were used as an incentive to respond. The cover letter informed potential respondents of their odds of winning one of the two prizes available (approximately 1/850).

### Survey Translation

For those with limited English proficiency, surveys were available in Spanish, Hmong and Russian. Typically, state surveys are available in these three languages, but can only be obtained by making a telephone call to a number provided. For the current survey, a new method was used by which participants could request a survey in one of these three languages.

At the bottom of each cover letter were instructions in Spanish, Hmong and Russian to turn the page for more information. The back of the page contained further instructions on how to request a survey in the language of preference. Recipients were asked to check a box on this page indicating their language preference and to then mail back the form in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Upon receipt of this request, the appropriate survey was mailed out. It was predicted that this approach would lessen the burden on the participant, thereby increasing the response rates for people speaking these languages. The success of this method will be discussed in the next section.

### Statistical Methods

Results were analyzed primarily according to agency size. In reporting data according to these categories it is possible to identify trends and response patterns which may assist with customer service quality improvements while guiding future research efforts.

For each close-ended survey item, a chi-square test was performed to determine if there was an association between group (i.e., agency size) and responses. If the chi-square test was statistically significant (i.e., P value less than .05, and therefore indicative of a meaningful association between variables), the next step was to remove the extra large group from the test to determine if the statistical significance of differences remained. In most cases, removing the extra large group from the test produced non-statistically significant results. This suggests that a difference exists between

the extra large agency and the rest of the agencies, but that no other differences among the smaller agencies (i.e., L, M, S, XS) exist.

Conditions permitting, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was done to determine more specifically the differences between agency sizes. ANOVAs were performed only if the item's response set is ordinal; if the response set is more categorical in nature (e.g., yes/no answers), chi-square will be the sole test used.

Responses to open-ended questions (9, 19, 20a and 20b) were coded to enable analysis. The coding process classified comments into the most frequently occurring themes. An "Other" category captured responses which did not fit into specific categories.

### III. General Survey Results

#### Response Rate

Of the 6,306 FoodShare or Medicaid applicants included in the sample, 345 were returned due to a bad address. Therefore, out of the 5,961 surveys presumed to have been delivered (i.e., 6,306 minus 345) a total of 1,899 completed surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 31.9%.

Looking at Table ii. below, it can be seen that the target response rate of 25% was exceeded for all five agency groupings (see last column).

However, this is somewhat misleading for the extra-small agencies, which required a much higher target response rate to obtain a high enough number of completed surveys to provide the statistical confidence for comparisons with other agency size categories. The fewer than expected surveys returned from extra small agencies do not make comparisons with other agency sizes impossible; rather, it just makes them slightly harder to detect. That is, any difference between extra small agencies and other sized agencies will have to be more conspicuous in order to be considered statistically different.

**Table ii.** Response rates, by agency size

Agency size	Total sent	Total delivered*	Expected total**	Total received	Response rate
XL	1,497	1,376	375	382	27.8%
L	1,492	1,392	373	407	29.2%
M	1,503	1,444	376	504	34.9%
S	1,486	1,440	372	517	35.9%
XS	328	309	177	89	28.8%
	<b>6,306</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>1,673</b>	<b>1,899</b>	<b>31.9%</b>

\* Total delivered equals number sent minus number returned due to bad address

\*\* Expected total based on sample size calculation

Overall, the response rate was higher than expected. Although the offer of a grocery voucher likely contributed to this, other characteristics of the survey must not be overlooked. For example, it is likely that the short length of the survey in addition to its simplicity also contributed to a response rate of just under one-third.

As discussed earlier, surveys were made available in Spanish, Hmong and Russian and could be requested by mailing back a simple form in a postage paid envelope. Based on census data, it was forecasted that of the approximately 1,673 surveys expected, probably none (i.e., < 0) would be completed by a Russian speaking recipient, 1 would be completed by a Hmong speaking recipient, and 71 would be completed by Spanish speaking recipients. (The cited percentages are based on 2000 Census data and have each been increased by 10% to account for predicted growth in these populations within the last six years.)

Table iii. below shows the response rates for participants mailing in a request form. Although the overall response rate was good (36.8%), one might have expected it to be higher still – particularly with Spanish speaking individuals – since these individuals put forth the effort to mail in the request. Although only 16 individuals requested a Spanish survey (and of those, only 5 were completed and returned), 79 individuals who responded to the survey indicated that they spoke

Spanish at home. This number is remarkably similar to the number of Spanish speaking individuals (71) who were predicted to request a survey based on census data and projected response rates. This suggests that many of these Spanish speaking individuals also speak English, and were therefore able to complete the English language survey, or were able to obtain the help of an English speaking friend or family member to assist in completing the English language survey.

The total number of Hmong and Russian surveys requested and completed was about as predicted, although a few additional Hmong and Russian speaking individuals (as indicated on Question 11) did complete the English language survey.

**Table iii.** Response rates, by language

Language	Total expected	Total requested	Total completed	Response rate
Spanish	71	16	5	31.2%
Hmong	1	2	1	50.0%
Russian	0	1	1	100.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>36.8%</b>

## Respondents

A total of 1,899 individuals responded, ranging in age from 18 to 97 years of age, with an average age of 41 years. On average, female respondents were 38 years of age and male respondents were 48. This difference also exists within the FoodShare/Medicaid applicant population on a larger scale: looking at the entire sample, and not just at those who responded, the average age of males is 43 years, and the average age of female is 33 years.

Of the 6,306 applicants sampled, 74% were female (N = 4,649) and 26% (N = 1,657) were male. Subtracting out the bad addresses, surveys were presumed to have reached 1,523 males and 4,438 females. Males and females had the same relative percentage of bad addresses, and both males and females had a 32% response rate. Looking to Chart i. below, it is seen that the ratio of male to female respondents is about equal for each of the five agency sizes. Chart i. also shows the total number of respondents from each of the five agency size categories.

**Chart i.**

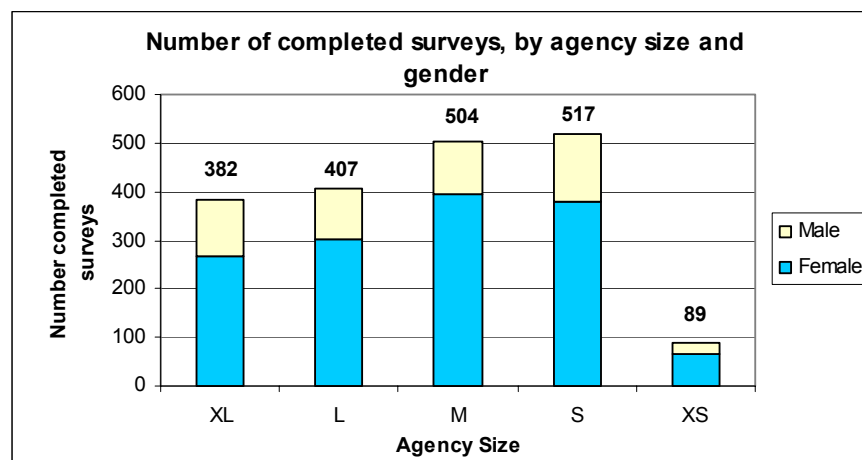


Chart ii. below shows the average age of respondents according to agency size.

**Chart ii.**

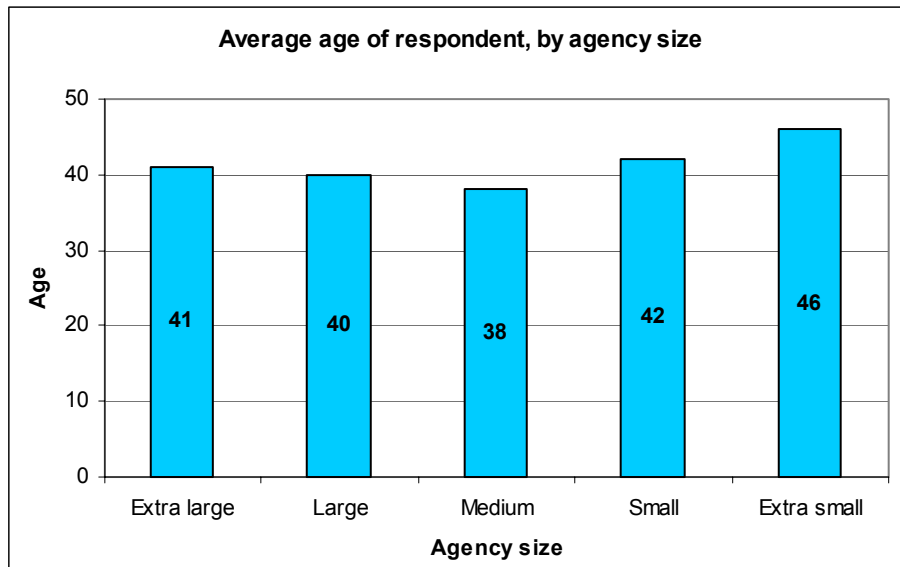
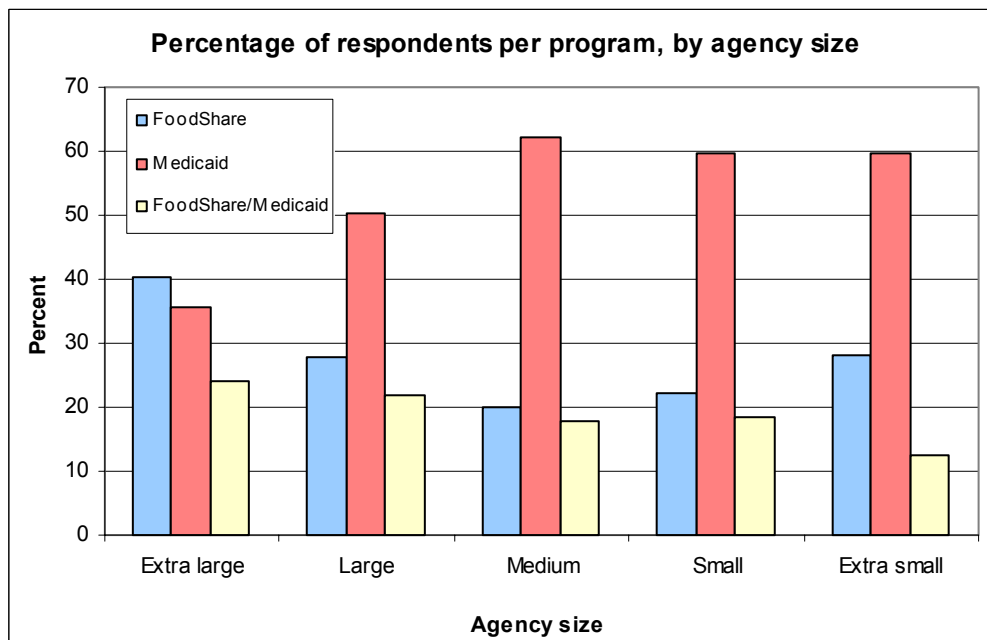


Chart iii. below shows the percentage of respondents receiving FoodShare, Medicaid, or both, according to agency size.

**Chart iii.**



## IV. Survey Responses

Survey results are presented by question, according to the order in which questions appeared on the survey. Tables breaking out results by agency size are accompanied by chart(s) and a brief interpretation. Tables with a statistically significant chi-square test will be indicated by an asterisk (\*) at the end of the question in the table. Tables which remain statistically significant even when the extra large group is removed from the chi-square test will be denoted with two asterisks (\*\*) following the question title within the table. Appendix A contains a copy of the survey.

### Question 1 – When did you start to get benefits for the first time?

Of the 1,845 individuals who answered Question 1, 63% answered that they had begun to receive benefits within the last six months. Although it appears that respondents from small, medium or large agencies were more likely than respondents from the extra large agency or extra small agencies to be first-time applicants, the chi-square test was not statistically significant, indicating that there is no relationship between agency size and responses.

**Table 1.**

Q1 - When you did you start to get benefits for the first time?					
			In the last six months	More than six months ago	Total
Agency Size	Extra large	Count	219	152	371
		% within category	59.0%	41.0%	100.0%
	Large	Count	259	136	395
		% within category	65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	316	177	493
		% within category	64.1%	35.9%	100.0%
	Small	Count	319	183	502
		% within category	63.5%	36.5%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	48	36	84
		% within category	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	Total	Count	1161	684	1845
		% within category	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>37.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Question 2 – According to our records, you applied for benefits in the last six months. How did you apply for these benefits?**

Almost 80% of respondents indicated that they applied for benefits in person, by visiting their local agency. The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large group is included in the test. When the extra large group is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large group is different from the other agency sizes, there are no differences among the other agency sizes.

Looking at Table 2. below, as the chi-square tests indicate, the most noticeable difference is that between the extra large group and the middle-sized agencies (S, M, L); however, the differences in percentages among these middle-sized agencies are too small to be considered statistically different. People in the extra large agency are more likely to apply for benefits in person at their local agency than individuals living in a county/tribe represented by an agency in one of the four smaller size categories.

**Table 2.**

**Q2- According to our records, you applied for benefits in the last six months. How did you apply for these benefits? \***

Agency size			Applied in person	Mailed in application	Total
Extra large	Count		331	37	368
	% within category		89.9%	10.1%	
Large	Count		314	90	404
	% within category		77.7%	22.3%	
Medium	Count		374	120	494
	% within category		75.7%	24.3%	
Small	Count		393	115	508
	% within category		77.4%	22.6%	
Extra small	Count		74	14	88
	% within category		84.1%	15.9%	
Total	Count		1486	376	1862
	% within category		79.8%	20.2%	100.0%

\* Chi-square test including the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 32.6$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ )



### Question 3 – When you applied for benefits this time, how long did you have to wait at your local agency before you were seen?

Question 3 is the first question on the survey to assess the aspect of timeliness. Of the 1,839 respondents who answered this question, two-thirds (66%) said they were seen in 30 minutes or less, while just under 9% said they waited an hour or more. Both the initial and follow-up chi-square tests (i.e., first including the extra large agency, second excluding the extra large agency) were statistically significant, indicating that there is a relationship between agency size and responses. As agency size increases, the time spent waiting at a local agency also increases.

An ANOVA was conducted to determine where the specific differences between agency sizes were. Looking at Table 3. below, the ANOVA identifies the extra large agency as being different from all other agency sizes, and the extra-small agencies as being different from all other agency sizes. No differences were found among the middle-sized agencies (S,M,L). For example, in extra-small agencies, just under half of all respondents (47.7%) indicated they were seen immediately. This is considerably higher than the average (16.3%) and the extra large agency, where only 7.2% said that they were seen immediately.

**Table 3.**

**Q3 - When you applied for benefits this time, how long did you have to wait at your local agency before you were seen? \*\***

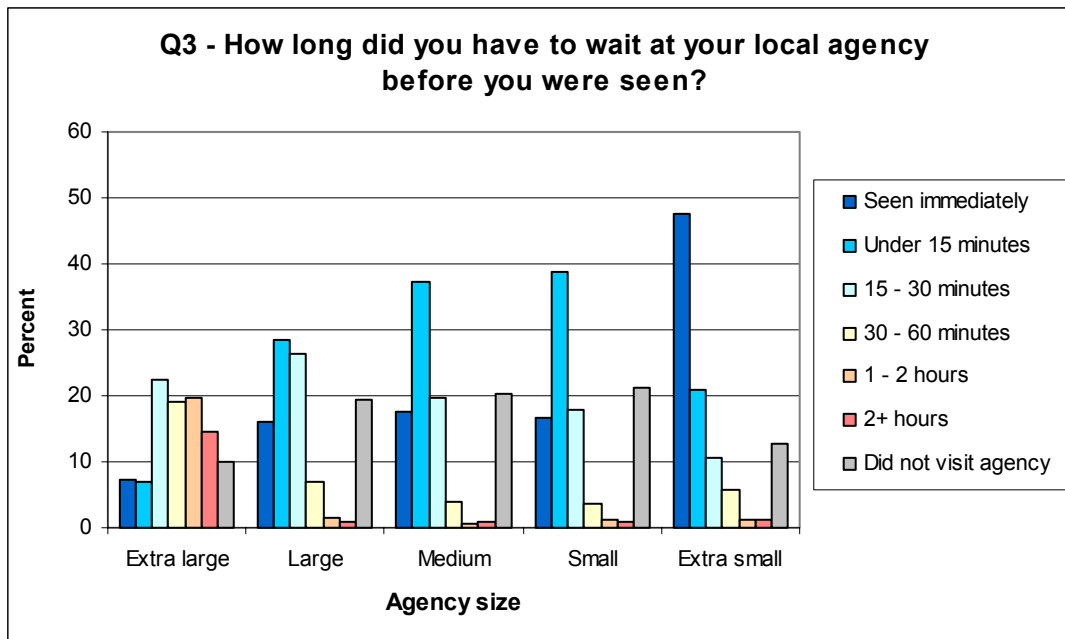
			Seen immediately	Under 15 minutes	15 - 30 minutes	30 - 60 minutes	1 - 2 hours	More than 2 hours	Did not visit local agency	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	27	26	84	71	74	54	37	373
		% in category	7.2%	7.0%	22.5%	19.0%	19.8%	14.5%	9.9%	100.0%
	Large	Count	62	111	103	27	6	4	76	389
		% in category	15.9%	28.5%	26.5%	6.9%	1.5%	1.0%	19.5%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	86	183	96	19	3	4	99	490
		% in category	17.6%	37.3%	19.6%	3.9%	.6%	.8%	20.2%	100.0%
	Small	Count	83	194	89	18	6	5	106	501
		% in category	16.6%	38.7%	17.8%	3.6%	1.2%	1.0%	21.2%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	41	18	9	5	1	1	11	86
		% in category	47.7%	20.9%	10.5%	5.8%	1.2%	1.2%	12.8%	100.0%
	Total	Count	299	532	381	140	90	68	329	1839
		% in category	16.3%	28.9%	20.7%	7.6%	4.9%	3.7%	17.9%	100.0%

\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 642.4$ ,  $df = 24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 78.5$ ,  $df = 18$ ,  $p < .001$ )

The difference between the extra large agency and all other sized agencies is exemplified in the percentage of respondents who indicated that it took two hours or more to be seen. In the extra large category, 14.5% of respondents indicated a wait time of two or more hours, while among the four

other sized agencies, only 1.2% or less of respondents indicated a two hour wait time. See Chart 1. below for an illustration of these differences.

**Chart 1.**



The ANOVA did not reveal any statistical difference among small, medium and large agencies beyond their differences as compared to the extra large agency and extra-small agencies. Looking at Chart 1., the similarities across these three categories can be seen.

It is also worth comparing the number of respondents who answered, “I did not visit my local agency,” on Question 3 with the number of respondents who answered, “I applied by mailing in my application,” on Question 2. Presumably, these responses should capture the same individuals. In Question 2, 376 respondents indicated that they had mailed in the application. In Question 3, however, only 329 respondents indicated that they did not visit their local agency.

Overall, respondents visiting the extra large agency wait longer than those visiting other sized agencies, which was expected since it has a higher percentage of in-person visits. Additionally, those visiting very small agencies are likely to see a worker immediately. However, there were no differences among small, medium and large agencies.

#### Question 4 – Before visiting your local agency this time, did you set up an appointment to see a local agency worker?

Respondents who answered, “I did not visit my local agency,” in Question 3 were asked to skip Question 4, to ensure that only people who visited their agency answered Question 4.

Of the 1,495 respondents who answered Question 4, two-thirds (66.1%) indicated that they set up an appointment at their local agency ahead of time. Chi-square tests show that there is a relationship between agency size and responses. The statistical significance remains even when the extra large agency is removed from the test, indicating that there are differences among the smaller agency sizes as well.

Inspecting Table 4. below, it is seen that fewer than average individuals visiting the extra large agency (49.5% compared to 66.1%) set up an appointment ahead of time. Respondents visiting small agencies were the most likely to set up an appointment ahead of time, with 81.4% of respondents indicating they did so.

**Table 4.**

**Q4 - Before visiting your local agency this time, did you set up an appointment to see a local agency worker? \*\***

			Set up appointment ahead of time	Went to agency without making appointment first	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	164	167	331
		% within category	49.5%	50.5%	100.0%
	Large	Count	181	128	309
		% within category	58.6%	41.4%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	269	118	387
		% within category	69.5%	30.5%	100.0%
	Small	Count	320	73	393
		% within category	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	54	21	75
		% within category	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	988	507	1495
		% within category	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>33.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

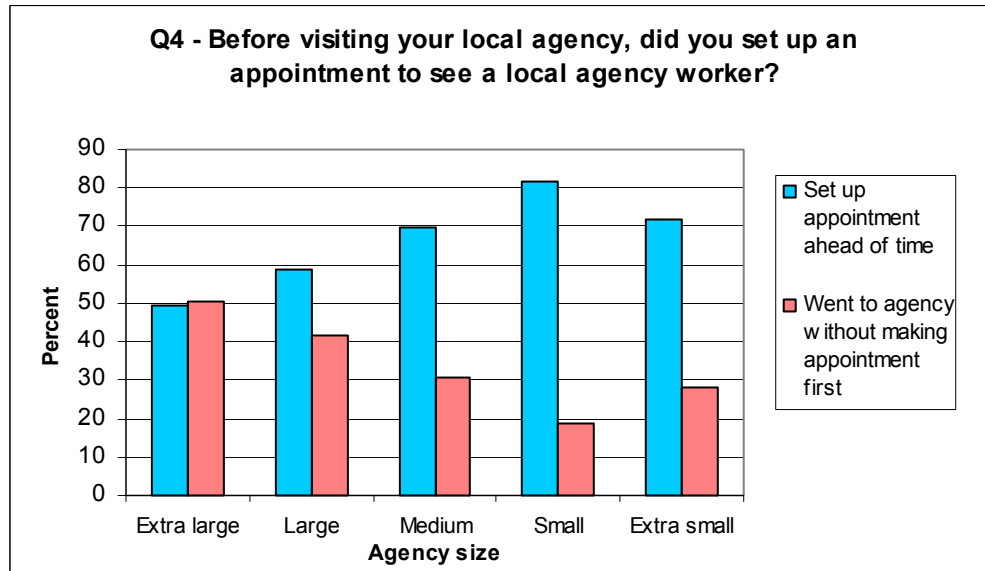
\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 92.6$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 44.2$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .001$ )

That half of the respondents visiting the extra large agency did not set up an appointment ahead of time suggests that it may be difficult to do so. Or, this might be a reflection of how the extra large agency chooses to operate. The extra large agency is by far the largest agency in Wisconsin, with a greater complexity of processes due to the number of individuals served. Therefore, many factors exist that may influence why people visiting the extra large agency are less likely to set up an appointment ahead of time. For this reason, any attempt at explanation based on this limited data is purely speculative.

Comparing Table 4. and Table 3., one can infer, depending on agency size, how important it is to make an appointment ahead of time. For example, with extra small agencies, although nearly 30%

did not make an appointment, almost half of respondents visiting these agencies indicated they were seen immediately. In the case of extra small agencies, calling ahead to make an appointment does not appear to be urgent. Chart 2. below illustrates the distribution of responses by agency size.

**Chart 2.**



### Question 5 – How comfortable did you feel visiting local agency workers?

Respondents who answered, “I did not visit my local agency,” in Question 3 were asked to skip Question 5, to ensure that only people who visited their agency in person answered Question 5.

Looking at Table 5. below, of the 1,498 respondents who answered Question 5, a large majority (85.7%) indicated that they were either comfortable or very comfortable visiting their local agency. Only 2.7% of respondents indicated that they were very uncomfortable visiting their local agency.

The chi-square tests show that while comfort at the extra large agency is different from other agency sizes, there are no differences in comfort among the extra small, small, medium and large agencies. This means that although extra small agencies appear to have a much higher than average percentage of respondents indicating that they felt “very comfortable,” there is no statistically significant difference between this percentage and the 37.8% respondents from small agencies who chose “very comfortable.” The failure to detect this difference is one caveat of having fewer individuals from extra small agencies respond to the survey as a whole.

Looking at Table 5., respondents visiting the extra large agency report the lowest level of comfort, with approximately one-quarter (24.6%) reporting that they were “very comfortable” visiting their agency. With small agencies as the exception, there appears to be an upward trend in comfort as the size of the agency decreases. Chart 3. below illustrates these results.

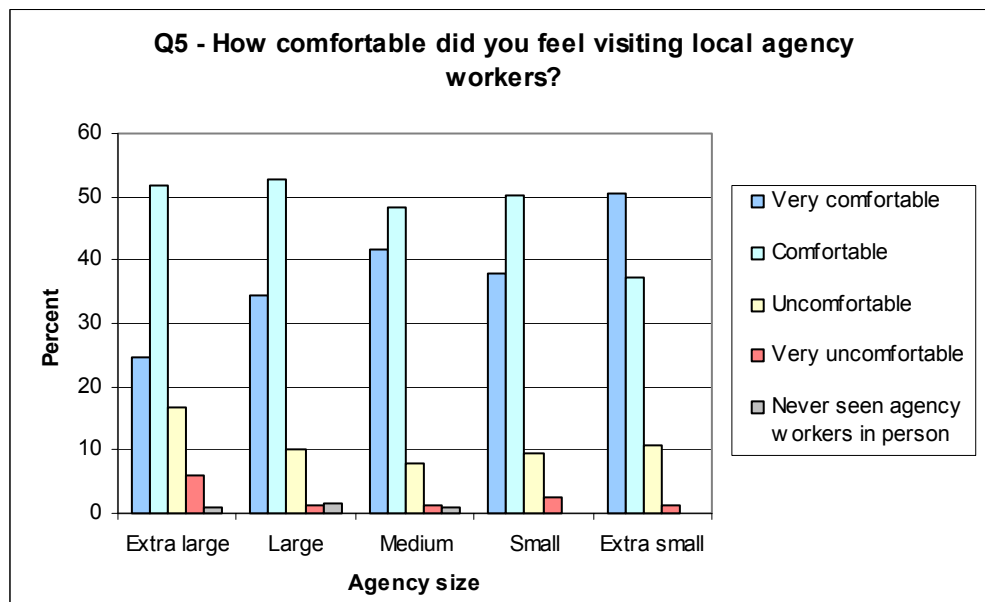
**Table 5.**

**Q5 - How comfortable did you feel visiting local agency workers? \***

Agency size			Very comfortable	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable	Never seen agency workers in person	Total
Extra large	Count		82	172	56	20	3	333
	% within category		24.6%	51.7%	16.8%	6.0%	.9%	100%
Large	Count		107	164	31	4	5	311
	% within category		34.4%	52.7%	10.0%	1.3%	1.6%	100%
Medium	Count		161	187	30	5	4	387
	% within category		41.6%	48.3%	7.8%	1.3%	1.0%	100%
Small	Count		148	197	37	10	0	392
	% within category		37.8%	50.3%	9.4%	2.6%	.0%	100%
Extra small	Count		38	28	8	1	0	75
	% within category		50.7%	37.3%	10.7%	1.3%	.0%	100%
Total	Count		536	748	162	40	12	1498
	% within category		35.8%	49.9%	10.8%	2.7%	.8%	100%

\* Chi-square test including the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 65.1$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ )

**Chart 3.**



Question 5 provided the option of selecting, “I have never seen local agency workers in person.” One could assume the number of respondents selecting this option should be low, since those individuals who did not visit their agency should have been filtered out of this question via the survey’s skip pattern instructions. That only 12 respondents answered that they had not seen local agency workers in person suggests that most people who did not visit their local agency, as established in Question 3, skipped this question as instructed.

## Question 6 – How comfortable did you feel talking on the phone with local agency workers?

Looking at Table 6. below, of 1,878 responses, 77.6% indicated they were either comfortable or very comfortable talking on the phone with local agency workers. Just under 10% expressed some level of discomfort talking on the phone, while 13.7% said they had never talked to a worker over the phone.

**Table 6.**

**Q6 - How comfortable did you feel talking on the phone with local agency workers? \*\***

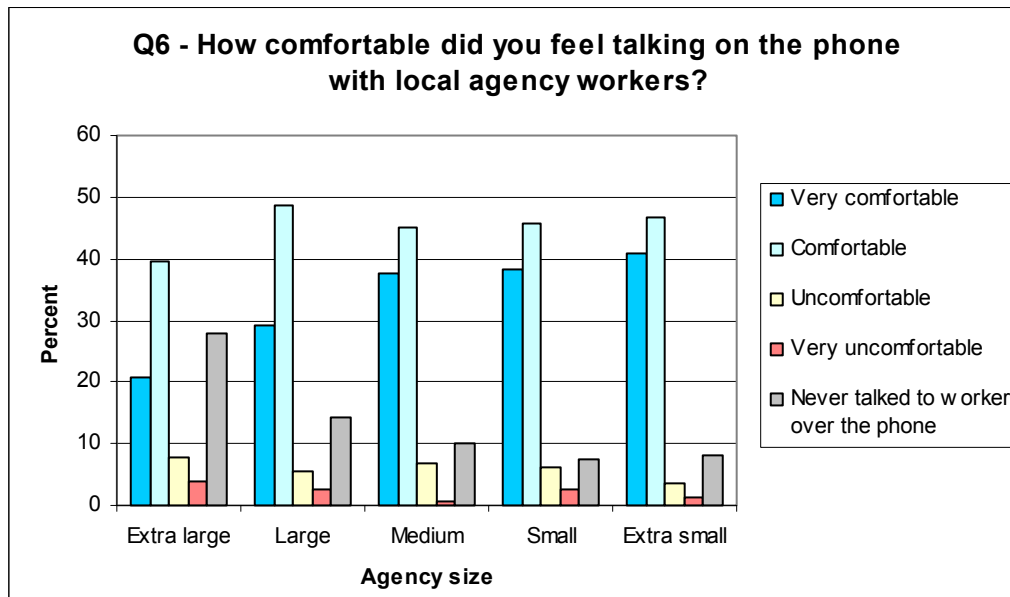
			Very comfortable	Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Very uncomfortable	Never talked to worker over the phone	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	78	149	30	15	106	378
		% within category	20.6%	39.4%	7.9%	4.0%	28.0%	100.0%
	Large	Count	117	195	22	11	57	402
		% within category	29.1%	48.5%	5.5%	2.7%	14.2%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	186	223	33	4	49	495
		% within category	37.6%	45.1%	6.7%	.8%	9.9%	100.0%
	Small	Count	197	235	31	13	39	515
		% within category	38.3%	45.6%	6.0%	2.5%	7.6%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	36	41	3	1	7	88
		% within category	40.9%	46.6%	3.4%	1.1%	8.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	614	843	119	44	258	1878
		% within category	<b>32.7%</b>	<b>44.9%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 124$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 25.2$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .05$ )

Chi-square tests show that there is a relationship between agency size and responses. However, the ANOVA test reveals that the only true differences between agency size categories are in the

percentage of respondents who said they had never talked to a worker over the phone. Comfort level only differed between the extra large agency and all other agency size categories, but there were no differences in comfort among the extra small, small, medium and large agencies. Chart 4. below illustrates the similarity between the smaller four agency sizes.

**Chart 4.**



#### Question 7 – Local agency workers returned phone calls promptly.

Table 7. below shows that of the 1,510 respondents who left a message for an agency worker to return a call, 72% either agreed or strongly agreed that the phone call was returned promptly.

Chi-square tests show that there is a relationship between agency size and responses. The statistical significance remains even when the extra large agency is removed from the test, indicating that there are differences among the smaller agency sizes as well. The ANOVA test identifies that respondents in the extra large agency answered differently than respondents in all other categories, and that respondents applying at small agencies answered differently than those applying at large agencies.

Looking at Table 7., respondents from the extra large agency were considerably less likely to “strongly agree” (5.6%) that phone calls were returned promptly as compared to all other agency sizes. Additionally, as compared to all other agency sizes, twice the proportion of respondents from the extra large agency (33.5%) indicated they never left a message for an agency worker. There are several reasons why respondents from the extra large agency may leave messages less frequently than their counterparts at other agencies. They might be more likely to reach a person, hence removing the necessity of leaving a message. Alternatively, respondents from the extra large agency might have been frustrated by the phone system and discouraged from leaving a message. Chart 5. below illustrates these results. Note the upward trend of those who said “strongly agree” or “agree.”

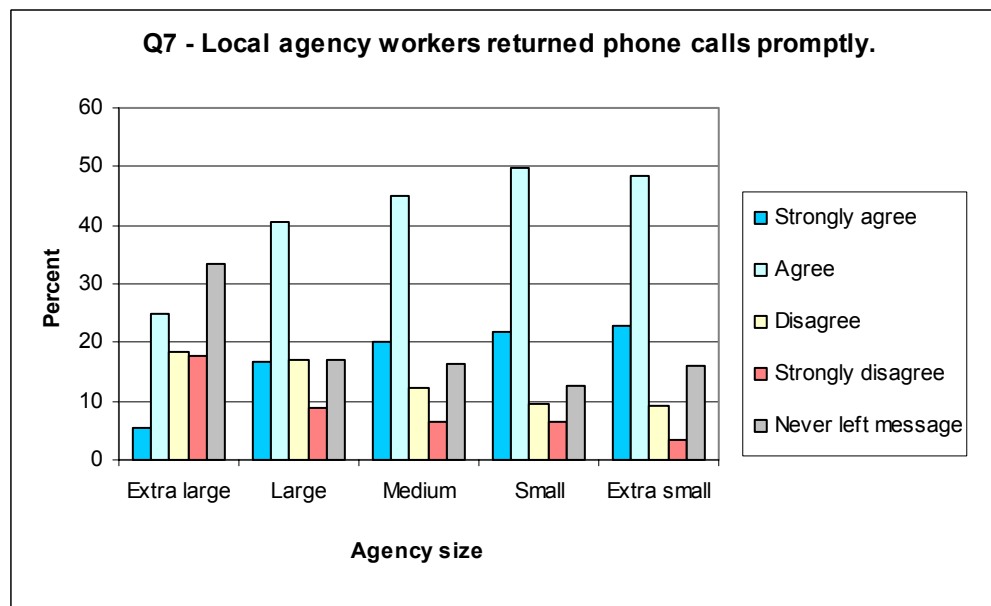
Table 7.

**Q7 - Local agency workers returned phone calls promptly. \*\***

Agency size			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Never left message	Total
Extra large	Count		21	93	69	67	126	376
	% within category		5.6%	24.7%	18.4%	17.8%	33.5%	100.0%
Large	Count		66	160	68	35	67	396
	% within category		16.7%	40.4%	17.2%	8.8%	16.9%	100.0%
Medium	Count		99	222	60	32	81	494
	% within category		20.0%	44.9%	12.1%	6.5%	16.4%	100.0%
Small	Count		111	253	48	33	65	510
	% within category		21.8%	49.6%	9.4%	6.5%	12.7%	100.0%
Extra small	Count		20	42	8	3	14	87
	% within category		23.0%	48.3%	9.2%	3.4%	16.1%	100.0%
Total	Count		317	770	253	170	353	1863
	% within category		<b>17.0%</b>	<b>41.3%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 192.2$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 26.6$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .01$ )

Chart 5.





## Question 8 – Usually, local agency workers returned phone calls...

Respondents who answered, “I have never left a message for a local agency worker to call me back,” in Question 7 were asked to skip Question 8, to ensure that only people who left a message with an agency worker answered Question 8.

Looking at Table 8. below, of the 1,424 people who answered this question, 38% indicated that on average, phone calls were returned by an agency worker the same day. A further 28.5% said calls were returned the next day. Combining these answers, two-thirds of respondents (66.5%) had phone calls returned by the next day. A significant percentage of respondents (20.9%) said it took 2-5 days before phone calls were returned. Perhaps the most striking result is that on average, about 8 out of every 100 messages are unreturned. However, upon inspecting Table 8., it can be seen that the proportion of respondents from the extra large agency indicating that phone messages were never returned is at least three times larger than any other group of respondents.

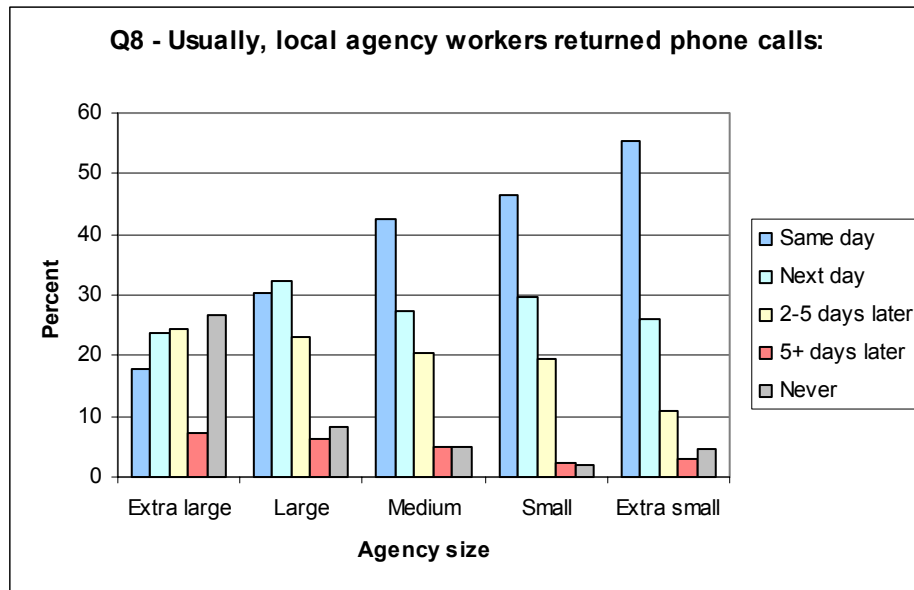
**Table 8.**

<b>Q8 - Usually, local agency workers returned phone calls: **</b>								
Agency size			Same day	Next day	2 -5 days later	More than a week later	Never	Total
Extra large	Count		42	56	57	17	63	235
	% within category		17.9%	23.8%	24.3%	7.2%	26.8%	100.0%
Large	Count		93	100	71	19	25	308
	% within category		30.2%	32.5%	23.1%	6.2%	8.1%	100.0%
Medium	Count		168	108	80	19	19	394
	% within category		42.6%	27.4%	20.3%	4.8%	4.8%	100.0%
Small	Count		196	125	82	10	9	422
	% within category		46.4%	29.6%	19.4%	2.4%	2.1%	100.0%
Extra small	Count		36	17	7	2	3	65
	% within category		55.4%	26.2%	10.8%	3.1%	4.6%	100.0%
Total	Count		535	406	297	67	119	1424
	% within category		<b>37.6%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 187.6$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 41.4$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Chi-square tests show that there is a relationship between agency size and responses. The statistical significance remains even when the extra large agency is removed from the test, indicating that there are differences among the smaller agency sizes as well. Chart 6. below illustrates the differences between agencies with respect to the average time phone calls were returned. The two clearest –and complementary– trends seen are those highlighted in blue and grey (i.e., first and last columns for each agency size). The “dark blue” trend shows that as the agency size decreases, the percentage of respondents answering “same day” increases. The “grey” trend shows that as agency size decreases, so does the percentage of respondents indicating that messages left were never returned. The chart also illustrates that agency sizes do not differ significantly in the percentage of respondents choosing any of the three other options: next day, 2-5 days later, or greater than 5 days later.

**Chart 6.**



## Question 9 – Agency staff treated me with respect.

Question 9 asked respondents to provide a global assessment of whether or not agency staff was respectful toward them. Respondents who selected “strongly disagree” were asked to provide an explanation.

Of the 1,818 individuals who responded to this question, a strong majority (92.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Agency staff treated me with respect.” About 8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The chi-square tests show that while there is a difference between the levels of respect perceived at the extra large agency as compared to all other agency sizes, there are no statistical differences between how respect is perceived within the other agencies. Looking at Table 9., it is seen that the percentages of respondents choosing each of the available options is about the same for extra small,

small, medium and large agencies. However, in looking at the percentage of respondents choosing “strongly agree” for example, it is seen that the extra large agency’s percentage is considerably less than all other categories. Chart 7. below also illustrates these differences.

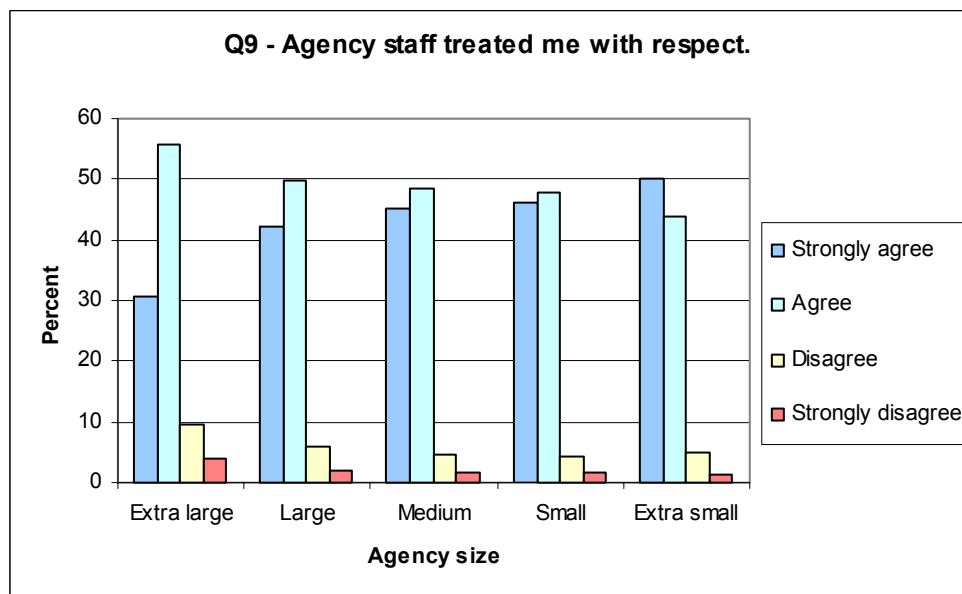
**Table 9.**

**Q9 - Agency staff treated me with respect \***

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	
Agency size	Extra large	Count	113	205	35	15	368
		% within category	30.7%	55.7%	9.5%	4.1%	100.0%
	Large	Count	163	192	23	7	385
		% within category	42.3%	49.9%	6.0%	1.8%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	218	234	22	8	482
		% within category	45.2%	48.5%	4.6%	1.7%	100.0%
	Small	Count	232	240	21	8	501
		% within category	46.3%	47.9%	4.2%	1.6%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	41	36	4	1	82
		% within category	50.0%	43.9%	4.9%	1.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	767	907	105	39	1818
		% within category	42.2%	49.9%	5.8%	2.1%	100.0%

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 40$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .001$ )

**Chart 7.**



Only those respondents choosing “I strongly disagree” were instructed to include explanation in the space provided below the question. As shown on Table 9., 39 respondents chose this option. As can

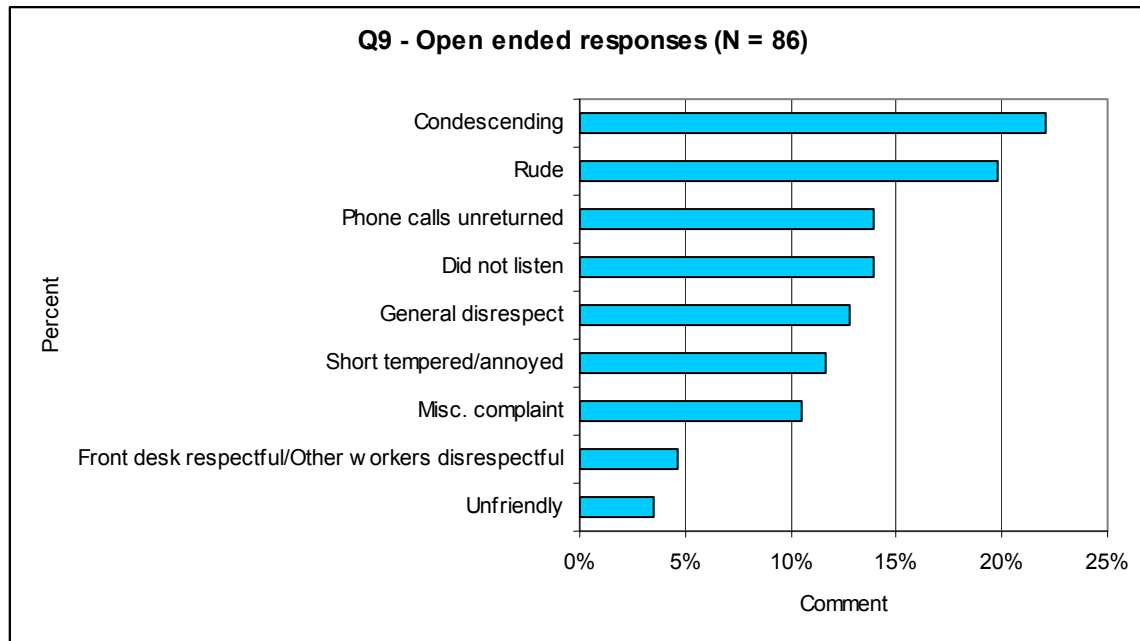
be expected when providing space to include written comments (especially when it is the first opportunity on the survey to do so), far more than these 39 individuals provided written comments. After reviewing the 137 comments provided, they were coded into 9 categories. Off topic comments (i.e., those unrelated to the issue of respect) were excluded from this analysis. Additionally, almost one-third of the comments were positive. These comments were also excluded from this analysis, since the objective of the open-ended portion of this question was to characterize issues of disrespect.

Chart 8. below shows the frequency with which each type of comment was made. The most frequently cited complaint regarding the issue of respect was that agency workers were condescending (22.1%). Examples of comments in this category include, “they usually act like they’re better than me,” and “...they act like I’m stupid and worthless.” The second most frequently made complaint (19.8%) was that agency workers were rude. An example of a comment in this category is, “they are very rude and act like it hurts them to help you.”

It should be emphasized that these percentages represent a percentage of the 86 respondents *who included a comment*. If taken as a percentage of the entire 1,899 respondents, these 86 individuals only account for 5% of all respondents. This partially corroborates the quantitative portion of this question (as seen in Table 9.) in which only 2% expressed that they “strongly disagreed” that agency staff treated them with respect.

It should also be noted that although representing one-fifth of survey respondents, respondents from the extra large agency accounted for nearly one-third of comments regarding lack of respect. To compare, respondents from large agencies also comprised one-fifth of all respondents, yet accounted only for one-fifth of comments regarding lack of respect.

**Chart 8.**



**Question 10 – If you needed to meet a local agency worker outside of regular business hours (Mon. – Fri. 8am – 5pm), how easy was it to arrange a meeting?**

Benefit applicants are provided the right to ask to meet outside of regular office hours if they are unable to schedule a meeting during regular office hours. However, the ease with which a rescheduled appointment can be obtained ultimately depends on the flexibility and willingness of the agency worker. For this reason, Question 10 was included in the survey to assess the level of difficulty experienced by applicants who needed to meet outside of regular office hours.

Table 10. below shows that 80.5% of the 1,813 respondents did not need to meet outside of regular office hours. For the remaining individuals who did require a meeting outside of regular office hours, more than half said it was easy or very easy (62%) to arrange a meeting.

**Table 10.**

**Q10 - If you needed to meet a local agency worker outside of regular business hours (Mon. - Fri. 8am-5pm), how easy was it to arrange a meeting? \***

			Very easy	Easy	Hard	Very hard	Did not need to meet outside of regular business hours	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	14	34	19	32	270	369
		% within category	3.8%	9.2%	5.1%	8.7%	73.2%	100.0%
	Large	Count	18	26	11	16	317	388
		% within category	4.6%	6.7%	2.8%	4.1%	81.7%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	17	34	12	10	402	475
		% within category	3.6%	7.2%	2.5%	2.1%	84.6%	100.0%
	Small	Count	18	42	11	16	413	500
		% within category	3.6%	8.4%	2.2%	3.2%	82.6%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	5	10	5	4	57	81
		% within category	6.2%	12.3%	6.2%	4.9%	70.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	72	146	58	78	1459	1813
		% within category	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 42.8$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ )

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the

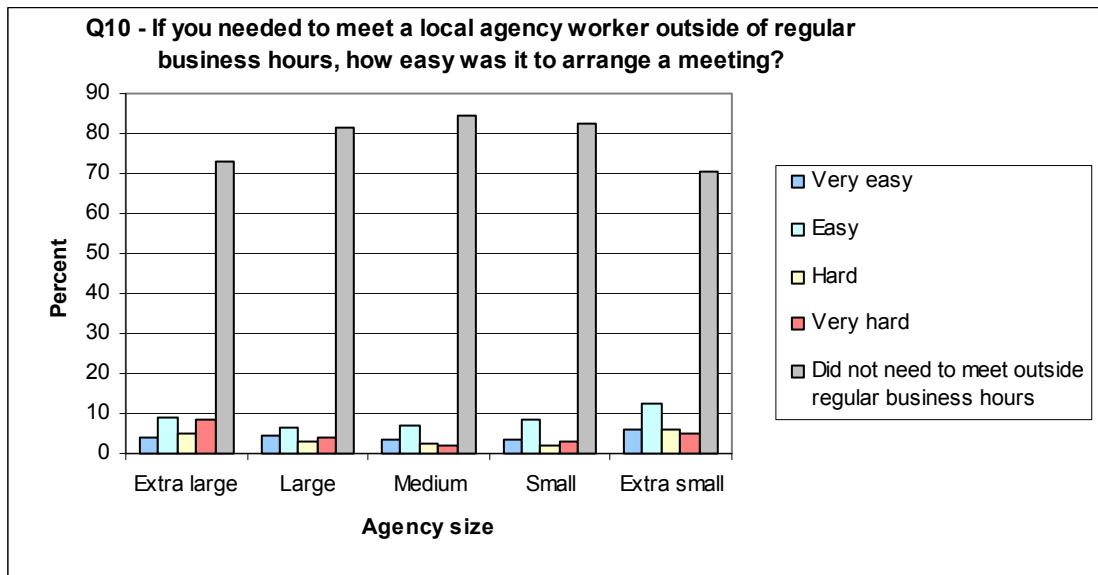
extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

The most notable differences between the extra large agency and all other agency size categories is the percentage of respondents (13.8%) who indicated that it is “hard” or “very hard” to arrange a meeting outside of regular business hours. Chart 9. below illustrates these results.

While the responses provided by individuals visiting extra small agencies also appear to be noticeably different from the average, statistically they are not different. The statistical detection of this apparent difference was likely obscured by the very limited number of responses in the extra small category.

Overall, about 1 in 5 respondents indicated that they needed to meet with an agency worker outside of regular business hours. Of these individuals, about 37% experienced some level of difficulty arranging a meeting with an agency worker.

**Chart 9.**



### Question 11 – What language(s) do you speak at home? (Check all that apply)

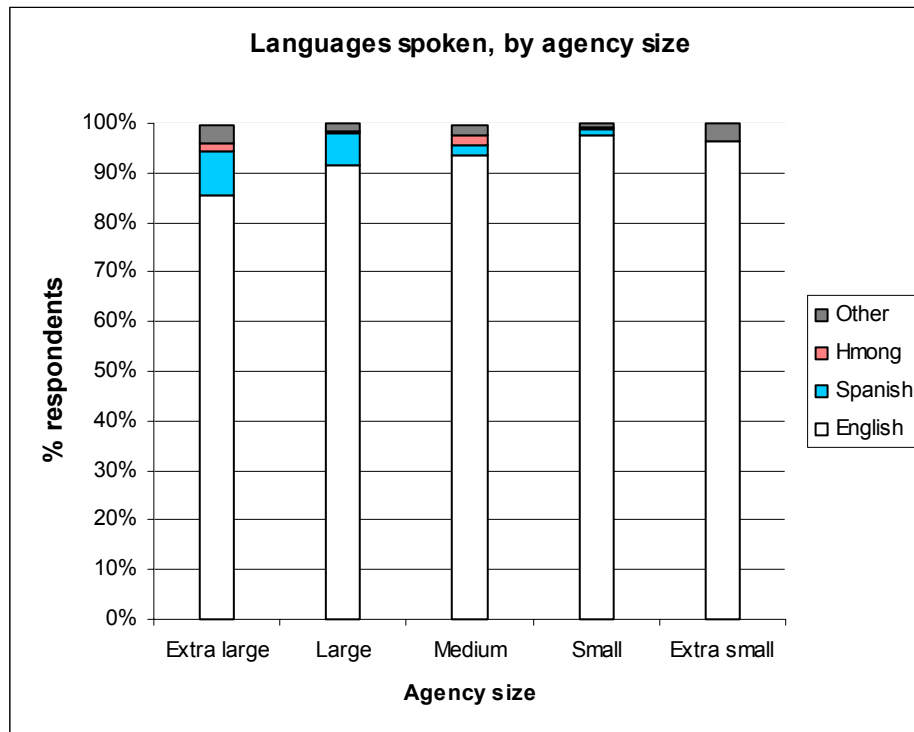
Question 11 was included in the survey to gather more information regarding the languages spoken by benefit recipients. In addition to 5 options (English, Spanish, Hmong, Laotian and Russian), respondents could select “other” and were then instructed to specify the language. The question instructed respondents to choose as many languages as applied.

Chart 10. below shows the percentage of English, Spanish, Hmong and other language speakers from each of the five agency size categories. The majority of respondents indicated that they spoke English (92.6%), with another 4.1% indicating they spoke Spanish. One percent or less indicated

they spoken Laotian, Russian, Hmong, which were the other language options to choose from. About 2% chose “other.” Languages specified as “other” included Polish, Tagalog, Italian, French, Greek, Japanese, Albanian and American Sign Language. Each of these “other” languages comprised less than .5% of all responses provided.

As might be expected, the extra large agency and large agencies (which include Brown, Dane, Racine, Kenosha and Rock counties) have a higher proportion of Spanish speaking respondents. Additionally, most of the respondents who requested a survey in Spanish were from either the extra large agency or another large agency.

**Chart 10.**



**Question 12 – If you needed help with translation when contacting local agency workers, how satisfied were you with the help you received?**

Benefit applicants have the right to ask for translation services. Since there are many factors involved with obtaining a translation (e.g., was it offered? Was it provided in a timely manner? Was the translation satisfactory?), Question 12 was included in the survey to assess the level of overall satisfaction with the translation process.

Table 12. below shows that of the 1,784 who responded to Question 12, the majority (87.4%) indicated that they did not need translation services. One might have expected this percentage to be closer to the 92% who, on Question 11, indicated they spoke English. It is possible that an additional percentage of people who understand English skipped this question entirely, since the

option that best suited them (i.e., “I did not need translation services) was the last in the list of responses. The quantity of missing data on this question (i.e., out of the total 1,899 survey respondents, the number who skipped this question) supports this explanation, as there is a larger than average quantity of missing data.

**Table 12.**

**Q12 - If you needed help with translation when contacting local agency workers, how satisfied were you with the help you received? \***

			Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Needed help but was not offered	Did not need translation services	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	23	40	4	2	5	289	363
		% within category	6.3%	11.0%	1.1%	.6%	1.4%	79.6%	100.0%
	Large	Count	17	22	0	0	0	338	377
		% within category	4.5%	5.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%	89.7%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	15	28	1	1	0	424	469
		% within category	3.2%	6.0%	.2%	.2%	.0%	90.4%	100.0%
	Small	Count	26	26	3	1	3	435	494
		% within category	5.3%	5.3%	.6%	.2%	.6%	88.1%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	3	5	0	0	0	73	81
		% within category	3.7%	6.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	90.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	84	121	8	4	8	1559	1784
		% within category	4.7%	6.8%	.4%	.2%	.4%	87.4%	100.0%

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 41$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $p < .005$ )

Of the 12.6% of individuals who required translation, almost all (91%) were either satisfied or very satisfied. About 5% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with translation services, and a further 3% said that although they needed translation services, they were not offered.

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories. These differences can be seen in Table 12.: About 10% more of respondents from the extra large agency indicated a need for translation services, which accounts for most of the difference between other agency sizes.



## Question 13 – Local agency workers clearly explained the FoodShare and health care benefits that were available to my family and me.

One of the main objectives of the survey was to assess the satisfaction with the amount and clarity of information provided by agency workers. Question 13 specifically asks how well benefit availability was explained to applicants.

Table 13. below shows that 76.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the availability of FoodShare and health care benefits was explained clearly. Another 15.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was explained clearly, and 7.9% did not talk to an agency worker.

**Table 13.**

**Q13 - Local agency workers clearly explained the FoodShare and health care benefits that were available to my family and me. \***

			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Never talked to an agency worker	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	88	179	55	30	20	372
		% within category	23.7%	48.1%	14.8%	8.1%	5.4%	100.0%
	Large	Count	112	177	35	26	38	388
		% within category	28.9%	45.6%	9.0%	6.7%	9.8%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	142	225	50	18	46	481
		% within category	29.5%	46.8%	10.4%	3.7%	9.6%	100.0%
	Small	Count	163	239	42	23	34	501
		% within category	32.5%	47.7%	8.4%	4.6%	6.8%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	28	43	5	1	7	84
		% within category	33.3%	51.2%	6.0%	1.2%	8.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	533	863	187	98	145	1826	
	% within category	29.2%	47.3%	10.2%	5.4%	7.9%	100.0%	

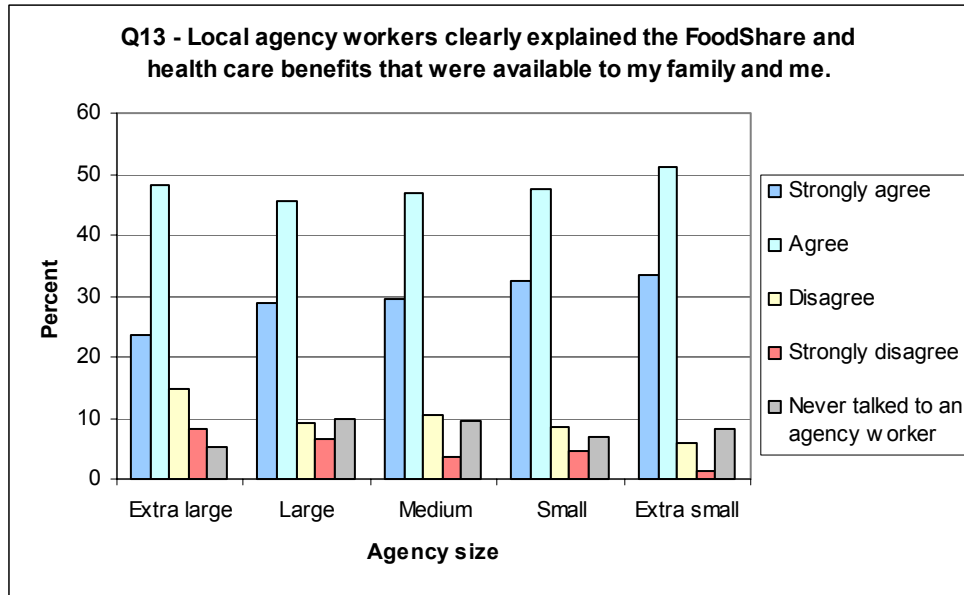
\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 37.4$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .005$ )

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Inspecting the table, agency sizes extra small, small, medium and large appear very similar with respect to the percentages of respondents choosing each of the available options. However, as supported by the chi-square test, the extra large agency's percentages are dissimilar from the other agency sizes'. While about the same percentage of respondents from the extra large agency selected

“agree” as respondents in other agency size categories, fewer than average selected “strongly agree” than average (23.7% and 29.2%, respectively). Respondents from the extra large agency were also more likely to have either disagreed or strongly disagreed that benefits were explained clearly. This may be in part tied to the higher than average number of the extra large agency respondents who were either not offered translation services, or were not satisfied with the translation services provided. Chart 11. below illustrates these results.

**Chart 11.**



**Question 14 – Local agency workers clearly explained what I needed to do to get benefits.**

Like Question 13, Question 14 was included in the survey to assess the satisfaction with the amount and clarity of information provided to applicants. Question 14 specifically targets whether or not applicants are clearly informed of what they need to do to get benefits.

Table 14. below shows that 83.6% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the agency workers clearly explained what applicants needed to do to get benefits. This percentage is slightly greater than the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing in Question 13. Another 11.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was explained clearly, which is slightly less than the percentage of respondents (15.6%) who disagreed or strongly disagreed in Question 13. Chart 11. below illustrates these differences.

It is somewhat surprising that the percentage of respondents who said “I have never talked to an agency worker” on Question 13 and Question 14 was not more similar. On Question 13 prior, 7.9% said they did not talk to an agency worker; on Question 14, only 4.9% said they did not talk to an agency worker.

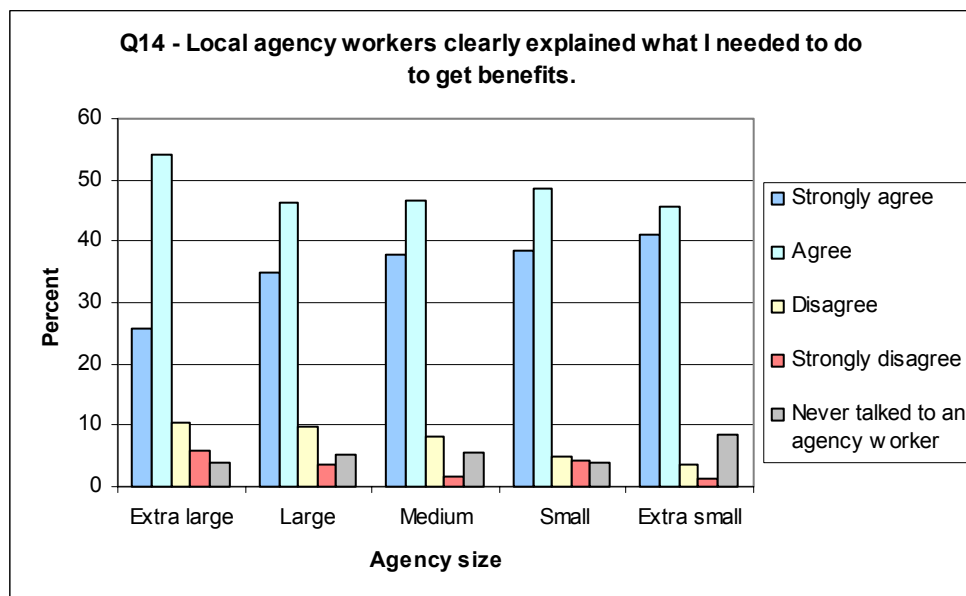
**Table 14.**

**Q14 - Local agency workers clearly explained what I needed to do to get benefits. \*\***

Agency size			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Never talked to an agency worker	Total
Extra large	Count		96	202	39	22	15	374
	% within category		25.7%	54.0%	10.4%	5.9%	4.0%	100.0%
Large	Count		137	181	38	14	21	391
	% within category		35.0%	46.3%	9.7%	3.6%	5.4%	100.0%
Medium	Count		185	227	40	8	27	487
	% within category		38.0%	46.6%	8.2%	1.6%	5.5%	100.0%
Small	Count		194	244	24	21	20	503
	% within category		38.6%	48.5%	4.8%	4.2%	4.0%	100.0%
Extra small	Count		34	38	3	1	7	83
	% within category		41.0%	45.8%	3.6%	1.2%	8.4%	100.0%
Total	Count		646	892	144	66	90	1838
	% within category		<b>35.1%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 46$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and chi-square test *excluding* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 21.1$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .05$ )

**Chart 11.**



The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is

removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Inspecting the table, agency sizes extra small, small, medium and large appear very similar with respect to the percentages of respondents choosing each of the available options. However, as supported by the chi-square test, the extra large agency's percentages are dissimilar from the other agency sizes'. While about the same percentage of respondents from the extra large agency selected "agree" as respondents in other agency size categories, fewer than average selected "strongly agree" than average (25.7% and 35.1%, respectively). Respondents from the extra large agency were also slightly more likely to have either disagreed or strongly disagreed that applicant responsibilities were explained clearly.

In comparing the responses from Question 14 to Question 13, it appears that overall, agency workers are more successful in explaining responsibilities to applicants than they are in explaining the availability of benefits.

**Question 15 – Written information given to me by local agency workers (like pamphlets and brochures) was easy to understand.**

Like Questions 13 and 14, Question 15 was included in the survey to assess the satisfaction with the amount and clarity of information provided to applicants. Question 15 specifically targets whether or not applicants feel that written information (e.g., pamphlets, brochures) is easy to understand.

There is a key difference between this question and the two prior "clarity of information" questions. While Questions 13 and 14 required the assessment of a person's performance (i.e., the agency worker's ability to effectively communicate clear information), Question 15 does not involve the assessment of a person; rather, it requires the assessment of printed information. Presumably, the assessment of this written information should vary less among agency sizes than assessments of verbally communication information, since to some extent, this information is the same regardless of agency. However, there is also the possibility that written information is not given out uniformly, in which case some applicants may be receiving additional or fewer materials than others.

Table 15. below shows that 83.5% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that written information was easy to understand. Another 7.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that materials were easy to understand, and 9% said they never received any written information.

Like Questions 13 and 14, chi-square tests show that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories. Chart 12. below illustrates these results.

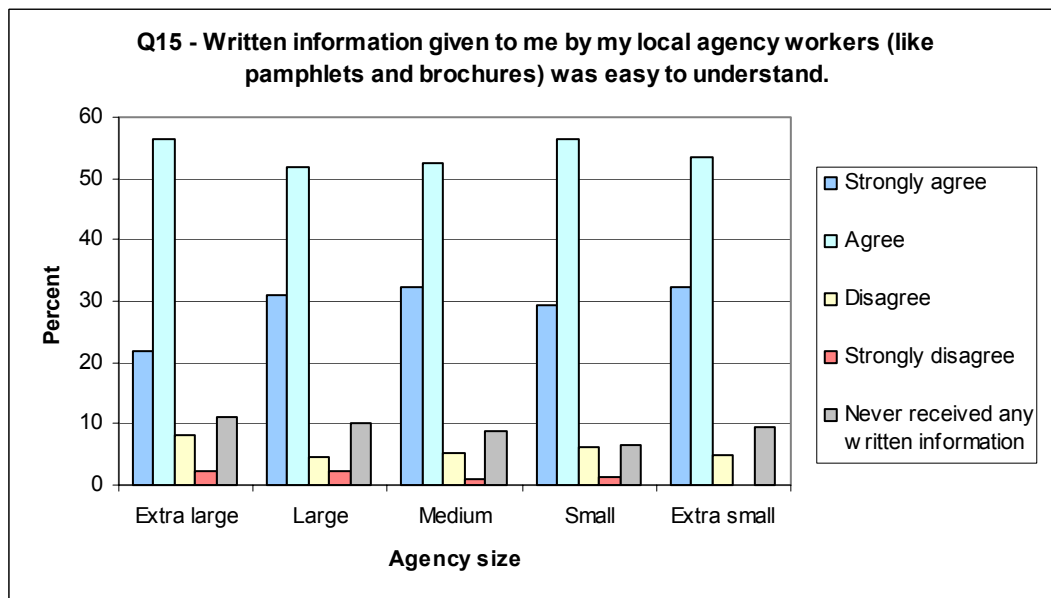
**Table 15.**

**Q15 - Written information given to me by my local agency workers (like pamphlets and brochures) was easy to understand. \***

			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Never received any written information	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	82	212	31	9	41	375
		% within category	21.9%	56.5%	8.3%	2.4%	10.9%	100.0%
	Large	Count	122	203	18	9	40	392
		% within category	31.1%	51.8%	4.6%	2.3%	10.2%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	158	255	26	5	43	487
		% within category	32.4%	52.4%	5.3%	1.0%	8.8%	100.0%
	Small	Count	148	284	31	6	33	502
		% within category	29.5%	56.6%	6.2%	1.2%	6.6%	100.0%
Extra small	Count	27	45	4	0	8	84	
	% within category	32.1%	53.6%	4.8%	.0%	9.5%	100.0%	
Total	Count	537	999	110	29	165	1840	
	% within category	29.2%	54.3%	6.0%	1.6%	9.0%	100.0%	

\* Chi-square test including the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 27.8$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .05$ )

**Chart 12.**



Inspecting the table, agency sizes extra small, small, medium and large appear almost indistinguishable with respect to the percentages of respondents selecting each answer. However, as

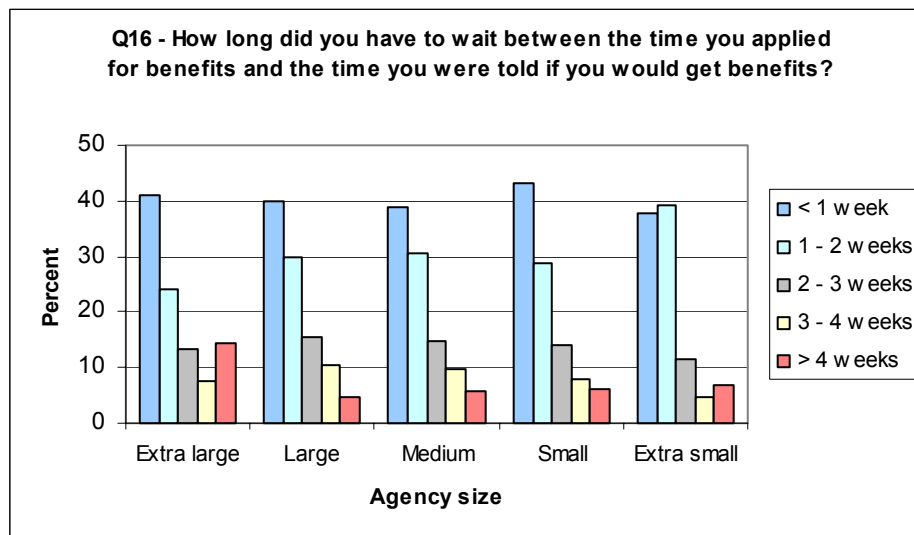
supported by the chi-square test, the extra large agency's percentages are dissimilar from the other agency sizes'. The most noticeable difference between the extra large agency and the other agency sizes is the percentage of respondents choosing "strongly agree" as their answer. In the extra large agency, 21.9% of respondents said they strongly agreed that written information was easy to understand, as compared to the mean percentage of respondents who chose this answer (29.2%).

### Question 16 – How long did you have to wait between the time you applied for benefits and the time you were told if you would get benefits?

One of the goals of benefit programs is to deliver decisions in a timely manner. Question 16 assesses the amount of time applicants waited between the time they applied for benefits and the time they were told if their benefit application was approved.

Of the 1,844 respondents who answered this question, 40.6% said it took less than a week to receive a decision regarding their benefit application(s). See Chart 13. below for the distribution of responses across agency size categories. As can be seen by comparing the same colored bar across each agency size, agencies look remarkably similar (in particular, small, medium and large agencies). Apparent differences can be seen on the "1 – 2 week" responses (light blue bars, or first column per agency category) and on the "> 4 weeks" responses (red bars, or last column per agency category), but the chi-square test is required to determine whether or not true differences exist.

**Chart 13.**



Chi-square tests show that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Looking at Table 16. below, extra small, small, medium and large agencies appear very similar with respect to the percentages of respondents selecting each answer. Additionally, the proportion of the extra large agency's applicants selecting each option was also generally within 5% of the mean. Therefore, it is likely that the statistically significant chi-square test detected the sizable difference between the percentage of the extra large agency's applicants, as compared to all other respondents, who said it took four weeks or longer to receive a decision. While on average, 7.4% of all respondents said it took 4 weeks or longer to receive a decision, applicants from the extra large agency were twice as likely (14.2%) to report this. To the credit of the extra large agency, the percentage of respondents choosing "less than one week" was the same as the overall average (41%).

The pattern of responses on this question was somewhat similar to the pattern demonstrated on Question 3 ("How long did you have to wait at your local agency before you were seen?"), underscoring that wait times – for both in person visits and application processing – are longer for respondents who applied at the extra large agency.

**Table 16.**

**Q16 - How long did you have to wait between the time you applied for benefits and the time you were told if you would get benefits? \***

			Less than 1 week	Between 1 - 2 weeks	Between 2 - 3 weeks	Between 3 - 4 weeks	More than 4 weeks	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	153	90	49	28	53	373
		% within category	41.0%	24.1%	13.1%	7.5%	14.2%	100.0%
	Large	Count	158	118	62	41	18	397
		% within category	39.8%	29.7%	15.6%	10.3%	4.5%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	189	149	72	48	28	486
		% within category	38.9%	30.7%	14.8%	9.9%	5.8%	100.0%
	Small	Count	216	145	70	39	31	501
		% within category	43.1%	28.9%	14.0%	7.8%	6.2%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	33	34	10	4	6	87
		% within category	37.9%	39.1%	11.5%	4.6%	6.9%	100.0%
	Total	Count	749	536	263	160	136	1844
		% within category	<b>40.6%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 44.9$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .001$ )

## Question 17 – Local agency workers clearly explained the fair hearing process to me (also called the appeals process).

Like Questions 13, 14 and 15, Question 17 was included in the survey to assess customer satisfaction with the amount and clarity of information provided. Question 17 specifically targets whether or not agency workers clearly explain the fair hearing process.

Table 17. below shows that 61.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the agency workers clearly explained the fair hearing process. This percentage is considerably less than the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing in Questions 13, 14 or 15 (77%, 84% and 84%, respectively). Another 11.5% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that this was explained clearly, which is close to the average percentage of respondents choosing “disagree” or “strongly disagree” on Questions 13, 14 and 15 (16%, 11% and 8%, respectively).

A key difference between this question and other “clarity of information” questions is that this question included “I’m not sure I heard about the fair hearing process.” This response was the second most frequently selected, with 20.7% of respondents choosing it (“agree” was the most frequently selected at 41.3%).

Additionally, 6.5% of respondents said they had never spoken to an agency worker, which is similar to the percentage that chose this response on other questions.

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Inspecting the table, agency sizes extra small, small, medium and large appear very similar with respect to the percentages of respondents choosing each of the available options. However, as supported by the chi-square test, the extra large agency’s percentages are dissimilar from the other agency sizes’. Respondents from the extra large agency were less likely than average to “strongly agree” and more likely to “strongly disagree” that the fair hearing process was explained clearly. It is also worth noting that respondents from extra small agencies were the most likely to say they were not sure they had heard about the fair hearing process, although this apparent difference was not supported by the chi-square test. Chart 14. illustrates the differences between the extra large agency and the other four agency categories.



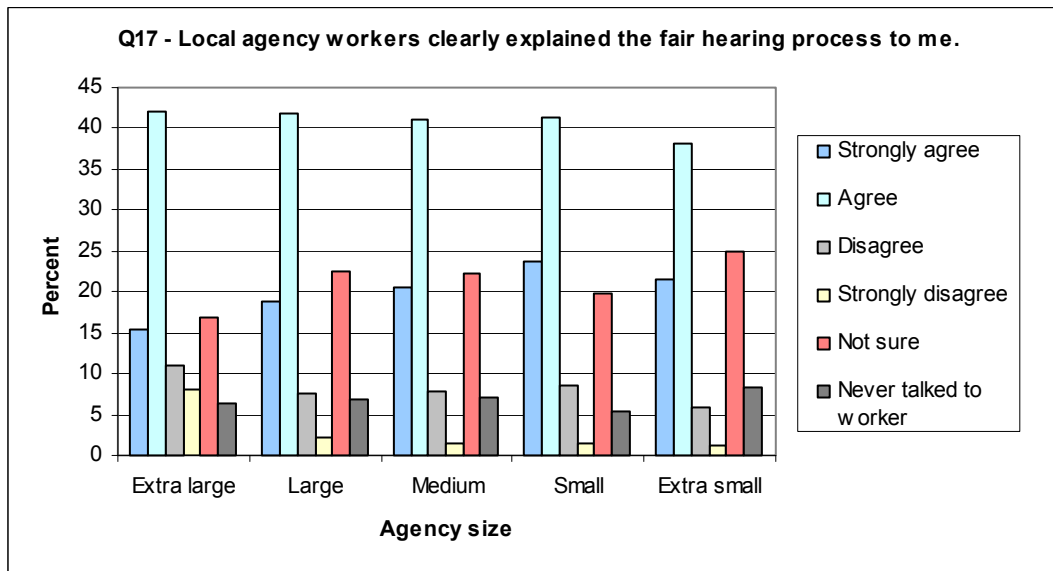
**Table 17.**

**Q17 - Local agency workers clearly explained the fair hearing process to me (also called the appeals process). \***

Agency size			Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure I heard about fair hearing process	Never talked to an agency worker	Total
Extra large	Count		57	156	41	30	63	24	371
	% within category		15.4%	42.0%	11.1%	8.1%	17.0%	6.5%	100.0%
Large	Count		74	165	30	9	89	27	394
	% within category		18.8%	41.9%	7.6%	2.3%	22.6%	6.9%	100.0%
Medium	Count		101	202	38	7	109	35	492
	% within category		20.5%	41.1%	7.7%	1.4%	22.2%	7.1%	100.0%
Small	Count		120	209	43	8	100	27	507
	% within category		23.7%	41.2%	8.5%	1.6%	19.7%	5.3%	100.0%
Extra small	Count		18	32	5	1	21	7	84
	% within category		21.4%	38.1%	6.0%	1.2%	25.0%	8.3%	100.0%
Total	Count		370	764	157	55	382	120	1848
	% within category		<b>20.0%</b>	<b>41.3%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Chi-square test including the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 60.3$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $p < .001$ )

**Chart 14.**



## Question 18 – Do you know who to contact if you have any questions about your benefits?

Obtaining and maintaining one's benefits requires knowledge of and the ability to navigate a network of complex rules and regulations. This underscores the importance for applicants to know who to contact with questions about their benefits. Question 18 was included to assess whether or not applicants knew whom to contact regarding their benefits.

Looking at Table 18. below, a majority of respondents (79%) said "yes," indicating that they know who to contact with any questions regarding benefits. A further 9.3% said "no," and 11.7% said they were not sure. Combining the "no" and "not sure" responses, 1 in 5 benefit applicants does not know where to direct a question regarding their benefits.

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Looking at the table on the following page, respondents from the extra large agency are the least likely to know who to contact with questions about benefits. While on average, 79.0% respondents answered "yes," only 66.8% answered "yes." It follows that they are also the most likely to either not know or be unsure of who to contact. There also appears to be a trend: as agency size decreases, the percentage of respondents saying "no" or "not sure" decreases. This trend can be seen below in Chart 15 on the following page. Although this trend is not statistically supported (i.e., there are no true differences between smaller sized agencies) it is suggestive of a trend nonetheless.

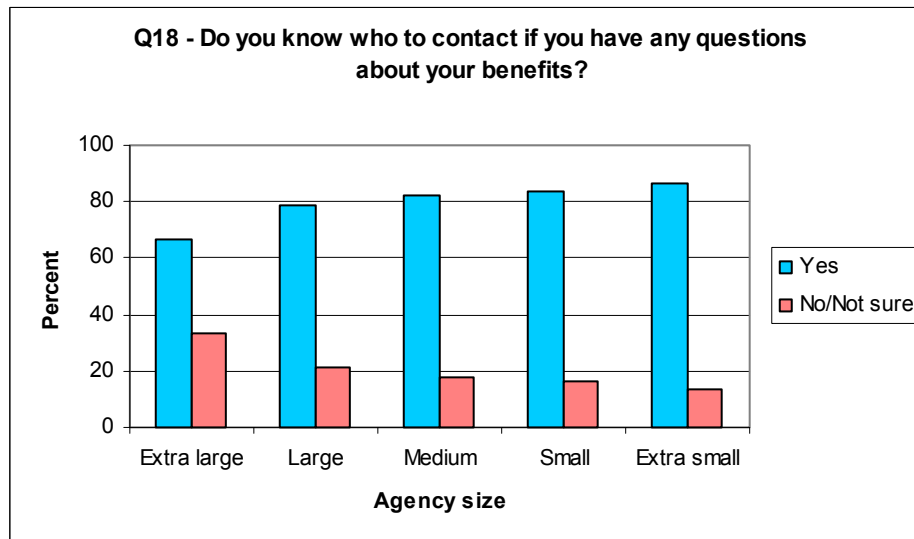
**Table 18.**

**Q18 - Do you know who to contact if you have any questions about your benefits? \***

			Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	252	62	63	377
		% within category	66.8%	16.4%	16.7%	100.0%
	Large	Count	317	42	45	404
		% within category	78.5%	10.4%	11.1%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	410	36	51	497
		% within category	82.5%	7.2%	10.3%	100.0%
	Small	Count	427	33	51	511
		% within category	83.6%	6.5%	10.0%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	76	2	10	88
		% within category	86.4%	2.3%	11.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	1482	175	220	1877	
	% within category	79.0%	9.3%	11.7%	100.0%	

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 52.7$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < .001$ )

**Chart 15.**



## Question 19 – Have you ever wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager at your local agency?

Question 19 was included as a measure to assess overall satisfaction with the application process. Table 19. below shows that most respondents (87.1%) did not want to talk to a supervisor or manager, and that 12.9% did.

The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

Looking at the table, respondents from the extra large agency are the most likely to say “yes,” (77.5%) while respondents from all other agency size categories are less likely to say “yes.”

**Table 19.**

**Q19 - Have you ever wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager at your local agency?**

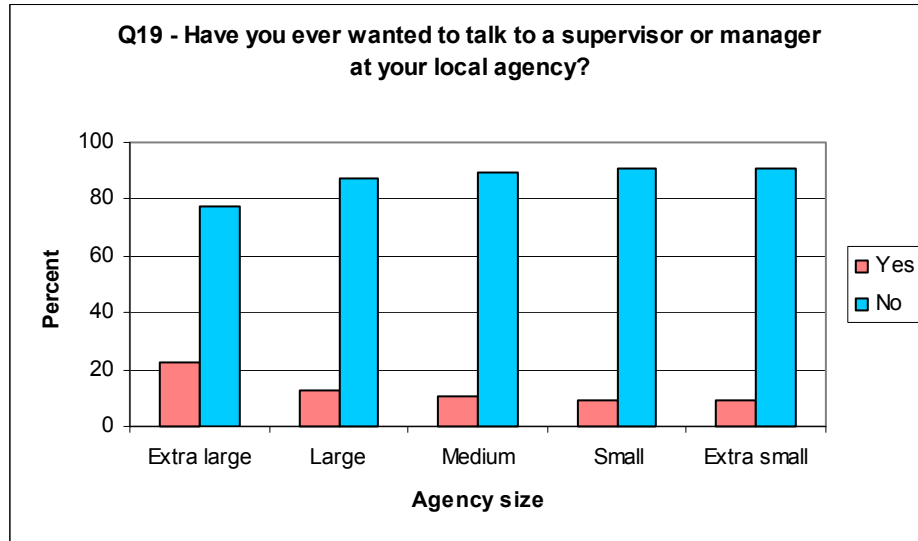
			No	Yes	Total
Agency size	Extra large	Count	292	85	377
		% within category	77.5%	22.5%	100.0%
	Large	Count	348	49	397
		% within category	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%
	Medium	Count	445	51	496
		% within category	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
	Small	Count	464	48	512
		% within category	90.6%	9.4%	100.0%
	Extra small	Count	80	8	88
		% within category	90.9%	9.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	1629	241	1870
		% within category	<b>87.1%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 41.2$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Like Question 18, there is a weak trend: as agency size decreases, the percentage of respondents answering “yes” decreases. This can also be seen on Chart 16. below.

The 241 individuals who answered, “yes” were asked to explain why they wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager. Slightly fewer respondents ( $n = 215$ ) included a written explanation. Chart 17. below shows the reasons that were most frequently given. In addition, the chart also shows the percentage of respondents from each of the five sizes of agencies who provided each type of reason.

**Chart 16.**



**Chart 17.**

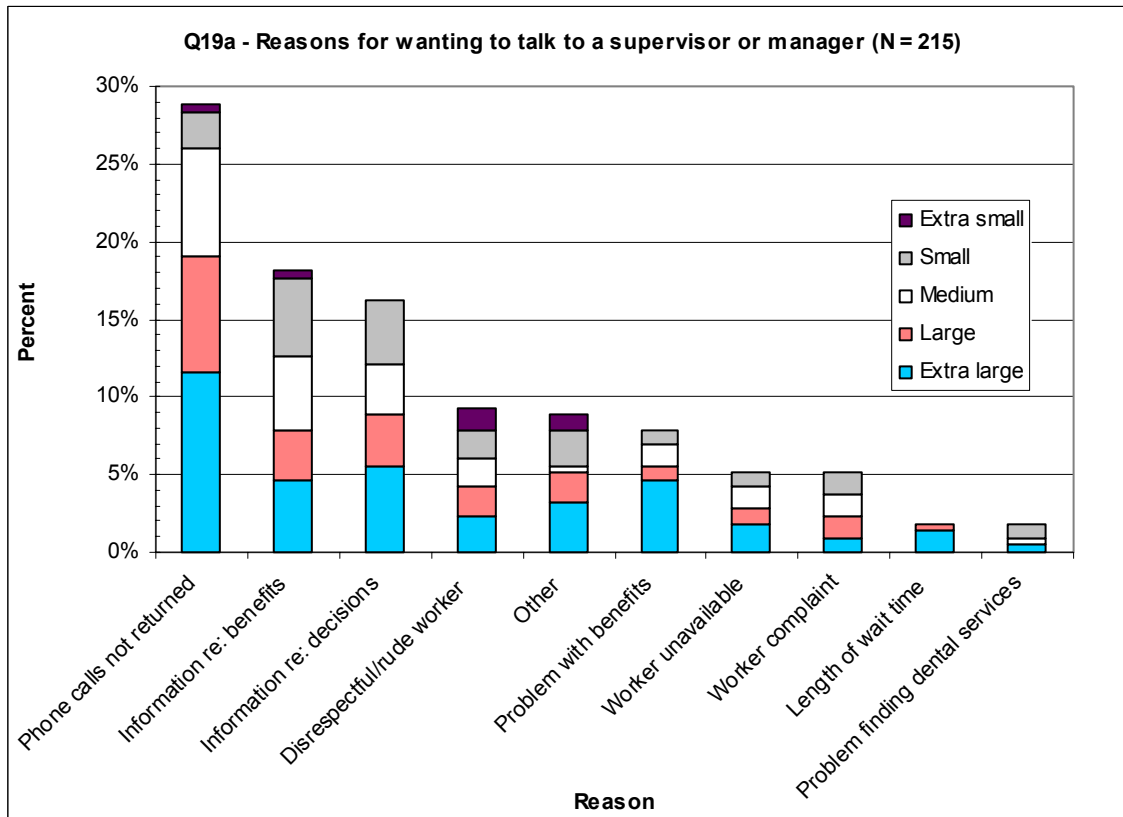


Chart 17. shows that by far, the most frequently cited reason for wanting to talk to a supervisor or manager was due to unreturned phone calls. Nearly one-third of all instances of wanting to talk to a supervisor or manager were because of this. Although respondents from small agencies comprised about 20% of all survey participants, they only accounted for about 8% of respondents citing this reason. The extra large agency, on the other hand, also comprised about 20% of all survey participants yet accounted for 40% of respondents citing this reason.

Respondents from extra small agencies comprised only 5% of all survey respondents yet accounted for 15% of all respondents who explained that the reason they wanted to see a supervisor or manager was because their worker was disrespectful or rude.

**Question 20a – On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being very unsatisfied and 10 being very satisfied), how would you rate your overall satisfaction with your local agency?**

Question 20a was included in the survey as a broad, overall assessment of satisfaction. The chi-square tests reveal that the association between agency size and responses is statistically significant only when the extra large agency is included in the test. When the extra large agency is removed from the test, the results are no longer statistically significant. This indicates that while the extra large agency is different from the other agencies, there are no differences among the four smaller agency size categories.

**Table 20.**

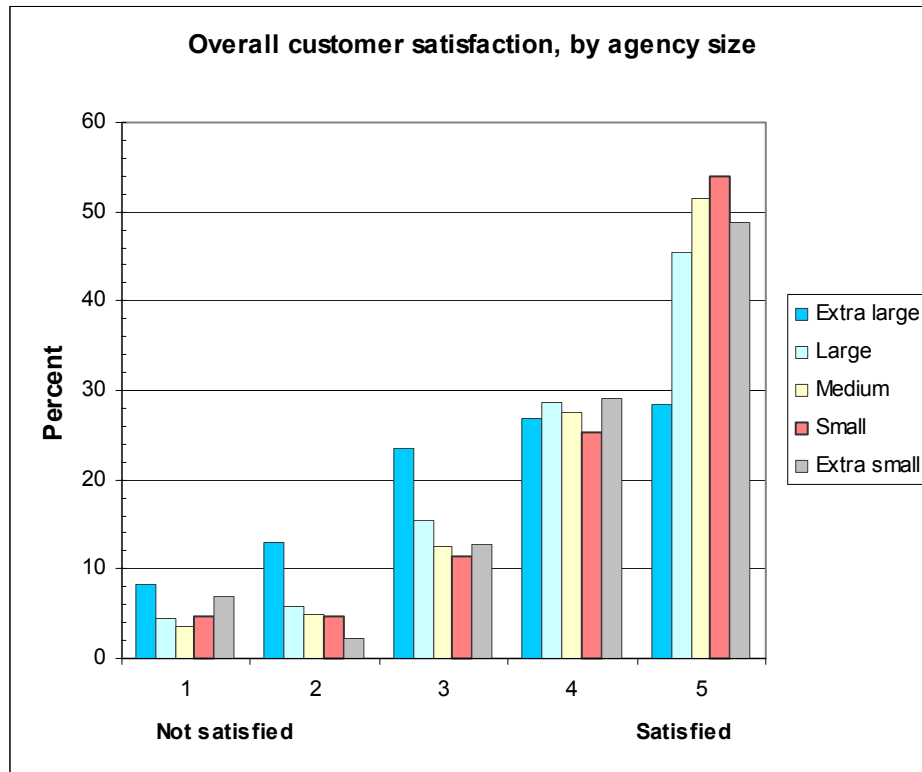
<b>Q20 - On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with you local agency?</b>													
			Unsatisfied					Satisfied					Total
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Agency size	Extra large	Count	21	10	23	26	55	33	50	51	38	69	376
		% within category	5.6%	2.7%	6.1%	6.9%	14.6%	8.8%	13.3%	13.6%	10.1%	18.4%	100%
	Large	Count	10	8	7	16	34	28	42	73	74	108	400
		% within category	2.5%	2.0%	1.8%	4.0%	8.5%	7.0%	10.5%	18.3%	18.5%	27.0%	100%
	Medium	Count	9	9	11	13	40	22	57	80	99	156	496
		% within category	1.8%	1.8%	2.2%	2.6%	8.1%	4.4%	11.5%	16.1%	20.0%	31.5%	100%
	Small	Count	15	9	9	15	33	25	37	91	102	172	508
		% within category	3.0%	1.8%	1.8%	3.0%	6.5%	4.9%	7.3%	17.9%	20.1%	33.9%	100%
	Extra small	Count	5	1	0	2	9	2	13	12	9	33	86
		% within category	5.8%	1.2%	.0%	2.3%	10.5%	2.3%	15.1%	14.0%	10.5%	38.4%	100%
Total		Count	60	37	50	72	171	110	199	307	322	538	1866
		% within category	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Chi-square test *including* the extra large agency statistically significant at  $\alpha = .05$  ( $\chi^2 = 131$ ,  $df = 36$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Looking at Table 20. above, 28.8% of all respondents rated their overall satisfaction a 10. Nearly 63% of respondents rated their satisfaction an 8 or higher, indicating that a majority of applicants are satisfied with their local agency. On the other end of the spectrum, 8% of all respondents rated their experience with their local agency a 3 or less.

Chart 18. below collapses the original ten-point scale into a five-point scale. As the chi-square tests show, the extra large agency's percentages look perceptibly different than other agency size categories, while the four smaller agency size categories more closely resemble one another.

**Chart 18.**



Q20b – Please use the space below for any comments you have about your experience going to the local agency for services.

Question 20b was included to gather qualitative data regarding respondents' overall comments regarding their experience. Out of 1899 total survey respondents, 706 included comments here. Comments were reviewed for content and assigned one or more codes. The percentage of these 706 individuals who provided each type of comment is reflected in Chart 19. below. The chart is also broken out by agency size.

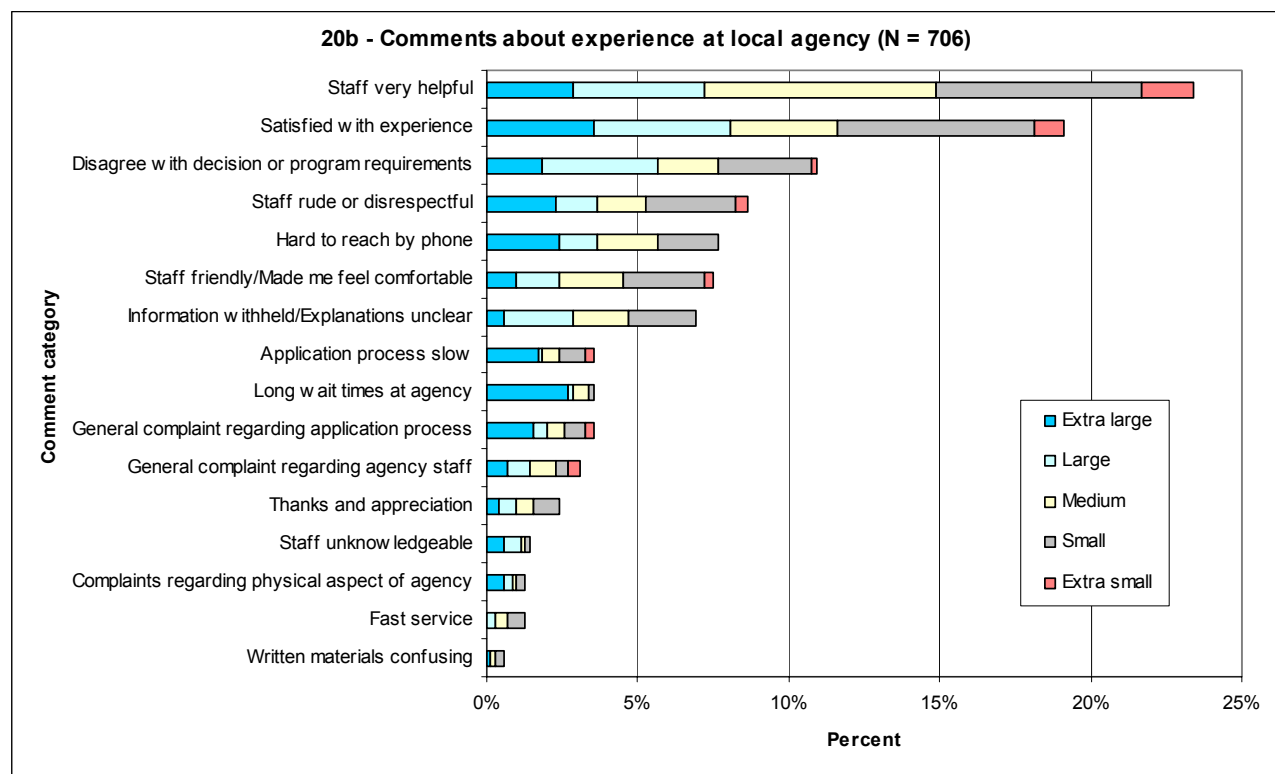
Positive comments were made about all agency size categories. Just over one half (53.7%) of all comments provided were positive. The most frequently made comment (23.4%) was that staff was

helpful. The degree of detail varied somewhat, from comments like, “They were very helpful to me,” to:

“When I went for my appointment I had forgotten some tax information. The worker was scheduled to be done for the day. She stayed so I could go to the library, jump on the internet and bring back the needed information. She could have gone home but was happy to wait for me. She pointed out that it would delay my food stamps and she wanted me to get them as soon as possible, so she processed everything as soon as I got back.”

The second most frequently made type of comment (19.1%) was that the respondent was satisfied with his or her experience. This was somewhat of a catch-all category, encompassing responses such as, “I was very satisfied with my service,” and “I was greatly relieved to be treated like a person. Someone who truly needed a hand-up and not looking for a hand-out.” The common theme among comments included in this category was that the person explicitly communicated satisfaction, or implied as such.

**Chart 19.**



The third most frequently made type of comment (10.6%) was that the respondent disagreed with some aspect of either a decision that was made, or with the program requirements which presumably related to a decision. Generally, these did not reflect upon the application process itself,



but more on the outcome of the process. Examples of these comments include, “I am disappointed that I do not qualify for medical coverage,” and “I do not like that even though I make \$305 a week with one child and one on the way paying \$450 for rent plus utilities I don't qualify for food stamps.”

The remaining comment categories each include 10% or fewer of all respondents providing comments. For example, 7.1% of respondents indicated that benefit rules were not explained well or that information regarding benefit availability was withheld. An example of this type of comment is, “I would like to know about more programs I would qualify for.”

Echoing their responses to Questions 7 and 8 (i.e., those regarding returned phone messages), another 7.6% of respondents said that it was difficult to reach agency workers by phone, in part because messages were not returned.

Responses to Question 9 (i.e., question asking about respect) were also reiterated in this open-ended format, with 8.6% of respondents commenting that agency staff were rude or disrespectful. For example, one respondent said:

“People are treated like numbers, not human beings with feelings. If I had a nickel for every time I heard ‘Do you know how many people I deal with every day?’ I'd be rich! I feel I am being judged because I need assistance.”

Overall, it should be emphasized that on this question, the positive comments were approximately equal in frequency as the negative comments.

**Q20c – Please use the space below for any suggestions you have that would improve customer service at this local agency.**

Question 20c was included to gather qualitative data regarding suggestions that respondents had to improve customer service at their local agency. Out of 1899 total survey respondents, 315 provided suggestions, which were reviewed for content and assigned one or more codes. Since the objective of this question was to summarize *suggestions*, a number of comments were excluded from analysis. For example, comments communicating a satisfactory experience were excluded since no suggestion was made.

Chart 20. below shows both the total percentage of respondents who provided each type of suggestion, as well as a breakdown of each type of comment by agency size.

The most frequently made type of suggestion (about 24%) was for local agency staff to more polite, respectful, and/or friendly when talking to applicants. Examples of such suggestions include, “Just be more friendly and pretend to enjoy their jobs,” and “I would have appreciated being treated a little kinder because it took all I had (emotionally) to ask for help.”

Reflecting the results from Question 20b, the second most frequently made type of suggestion was to answer and return phone calls more quickly. About 16.5% of respondents made this recommendation.

“Other” suggestions made up the third greatest percentage of suggestions. Serving as a catch-all for suggestions that did not fit into any of the other categories, some of these suggestions include, “Fire my case worker. I am scared to file a complaint because of punitive measures taken against people who do if your complaint even ever gets heard,” and “[Have] one staffer who stays with each client and thoroughly follows through on problems.”

About 13% of respondents indicated that they would like a better explanation of benefits as well as an explanation of all benefits for which they are eligible. For example, one individual recommended that staff “...create a facts sheet on included benefits and services.” Several respondents recommended the following suggestion: “Understand that people don't know all of the benefits they can get – don’t make them ask – offer it to them!” Taken together, the frequency of these two types of suggestions indicates that in general, applicants would like more information in a way that is easy to understand.

**Chart 20.**

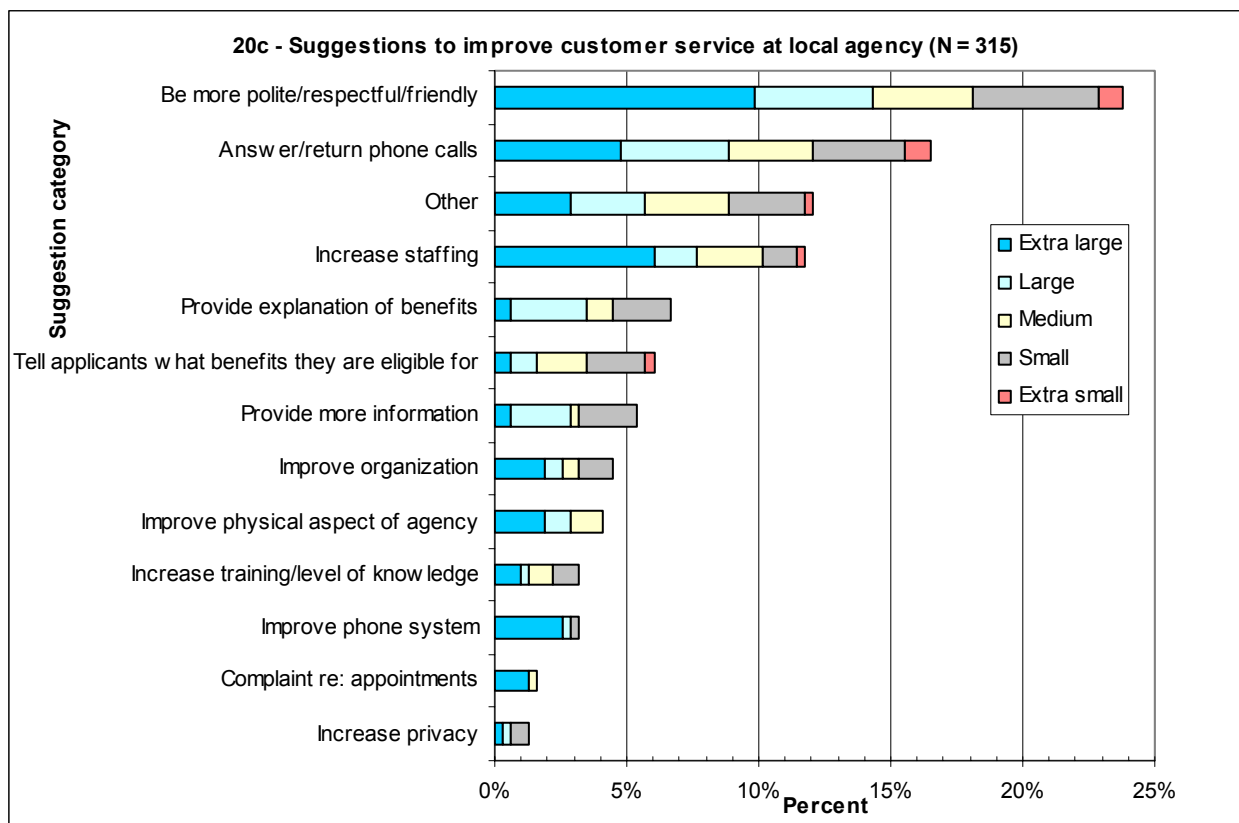


Chart 20. also provides shows how the suggestions are broken out by agency size. While about the same number of individuals responded from the extra large, large, medium and small agencies (i.e.,

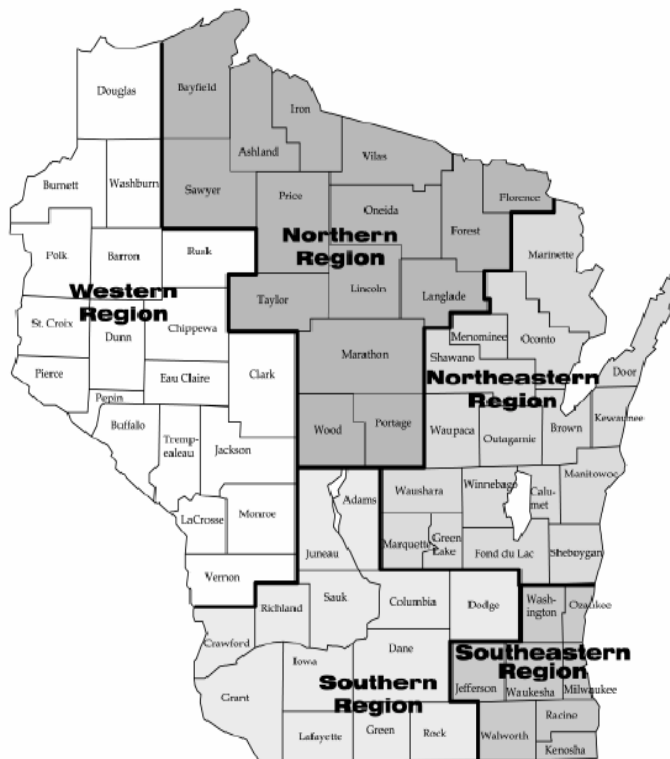
all agencies except extra small), an unequal number of individuals from each agency size category are represented in each suggestion category. For example, although individuals from the extra large agency comprised 20% of all respondents, they accounted for 42% of all respondents who suggested that agency staff be more polite, respectful or friendly (see first bar on Chart 13). The extra large agency is also disproportionately overrepresented in the suggestion categories of “increase staffing” and “keep appointments.”

## V. Additional Analyses

### Regional analysis

When grouping by agency size, in the majority of instances, statistically significant differences only exist between the extra large agency and the rest of the state. It is logical – and necessary – to question whether or not agency size was in fact the best way to group Wisconsin’s local agencies. Considering this, agencies were re-categorized according to region. Regions were defined according to established DHFS guidelines, as shown on the map below. Since it was predicted that the extra large agency (i.e., Milwaukee) might skew results if left in the Southeastern region, it was broken out as its own region. Additionally, it was decided to group tribal agencies together, instead of by region.

### DHFS Regions



As had been done in the first round of analyses, pairs of chi-square tests were performed for each question. The first test included the extra large agency. If that test showed a statistically significant

relationship between region and responses, then a follow-up test was done, excluding the extra large agency, to see if any differences existed between other regions.

Categorizing agencies by region produced the same pattern seen in the first round of analyses. On most questions, there was a relationship between region and responses, until the extra large agency was removed. Upon removing the extra large agency, the test was no longer statistically significant. So, while differences may exist between the extra large agency and other regions, there are no significant differences among the other regions. That the same results emerge following the re-categorization of agencies strengthens the initial finding that the key difference is between the extra large agency and the rest of the state.

### Correlations and factor analysis

In looking at survey results, it is often useful to see how answers on one item relate to answers on other items. A correlational matrix was created to see how each item relates to every other item. From this matrix, it is seen that several items correlate with one another. For example, Questions 13, 14, 15 and 17 are all highly correlated with one another, indicating that if a respondent answered, “strongly agree” on Question 13, it is likely the also answered, “strongly agree” on Questions 14, 15 and 17.

The logical step following a correlational analysis is to perform a factor analysis, which essentially groups together those items that correlate strongly with one another. The factor analysis pulled out two strong factors, or groups of items that are highly correlated. Table 21. below shows which questions “loaded” strongly on each of the two factors.

**Table 21. Factor analysis**

Factor	
1. Information	2. Comfort/Wait time
	Q3 – how long wait at agency?
	Q5 – how comfortable visiting?
	Q6 – how comfortable on phone?
	Q7 – phone calls returned promptly?
	Q8 – how long until phone call returned?
Q9 – treated me with respect?	Q9 – treated me with respect?
Q13 – explained FS benefits?	
Q14 – explained what I needed to do?	
Q15 – written info easy to understand?	
Q17 – explained fair hearing process?	
Q20 – overall satisfaction	Q20 – overall satisfaction

The first factor to emerge can be described as “information.” The factor analysis showed that all items regarding clarity and amount of information were highly correlated with one another. If someone felt the fair hearing process was not explained well, then it is likely he or she also felt that benefit availability was also not explained well. Interestingly, Question 9 (about respect) and Question 20 (overall satisfaction) were also highly correlated with the “information” questions. If a

person thought information was not explained well, he or she was likely to have disagreed that agency staff were respectful. Further, he or she was likely to have rated overall satisfaction as low. These relationships also apply for those who felt information was clearly explained: these individuals were more likely to have rated both the level of respect and overall satisfaction more highly.

The other factor to emerge involved items regarding comfort and wait times. For example, someone who felt uncomfortable on the phone with agency workers was also likely to indicate that visiting the agency was uncomfortable, that the wait at the agency was too long, and that phone calls were not returned promptly. Although the items regarding respect and overall satisfaction loaded highly on the first factor, “information,” they also loaded highly on this second factor. This should be expected, for satisfaction with overall services relates to all items on the survey, as does respect. If a respondent felt that benefit availability was not well explained, it follows that he or she might feel a level of disrespect. At the same time, if phone calls are not returned promptly, it follows that a respondent would feel a level of disrespect here, too.

Questions not appearing in Table 21. did not load highly on either of the two factors. For example, Question 1 (when did you start to get benefits for the first time) does not correlate highly with any other item.

## VI. Conclusions

The intention of this survey was to examine the level of customer satisfaction with the benefit application process. Of particular interest were the areas of respect, timeliness, comfort and provision of information.

In analyzing survey responses, several themes emerged. Summaries of these themes are listed below:

### **Respect and overall satisfaction**

- The majority of respondents – regardless of agency size – felt that they were treated with respect and overall were satisfied with their experience at their local agency.
- Respondents from the extra large agency were less likely to rate the level of respect and overall satisfaction as very high as respondents in other agency size categories.

### **Comfort**

- In general, applicants feel comfortable both on the phone with agency staff and in person, visiting the local agency.
- With small agencies as the exception, there appears to be an upward trend in comfort with agency staff as the size of the agency decreases

### **Wait times**

- As agency size increases, the time spent waiting at a local agency also increases.
- Unreturned phone calls are a problem experienced by respondents from all agency size categories, but in particular by respondents from the extra large agency.

### **Explanation of benefits, decisions, rights and responsibilities**

- The majority of respondents indicated that information was explained clearly; however, one of the most frequently made comments was that benefits were not explained adequately.
- Qualitative data shows that a substantial portion of comments relate to lack of clear information, particularly about benefit availability.

### **Flexibility**

- Although most respondents did not require a meeting outside of regular business hours, a substantial portion of those who did require this type of flexibility found it difficult to obtain.

### **Extra large compared to all other agency sizes**

- In breaking down each question by agency size, it was seen that often, respondents in the extra large agency felt differently than respondents from each of the four other agency size categories, and that there were no differences between the respondents from these smaller agency size categories.
- The qualitative portion of this analysis partially supports the quantitative results: the extra large agency was often overrepresented on certain types of open-ended response categories (e.g., “Be more polite/respectful/friendly”).

## Appendix A: Survey

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## Health Care and FoodShare Customer Satisfaction Survey

The following questions will ask you about your experience with your county/tribal social or human services agency (local agency). Your local agency is where you would apply in person for benefits like FoodShare and health care. Healthy Start, BadgerCare, MAPP, AFDC Medicaid, and MA/Title 19 are all health care programs.

Please completely fill in the circle beside the answer that is true for you or best describes how you feel. Please print any comments in the space provided.

Shade Circles Like This--> ●

Not Like This--> 

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. When did you start to get benefits for the first time?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> In the last six months</p> <p><input type="radio"/> More than six months ago</p> <p>2. According to our records, you applied for benefits in the last six months. How did you apply for these benefits?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I applied in person, at my local agency</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I applied by mailing in my application</p> <p>3. When you applied for benefits this time, how long did you have to wait at your local agency before you were seen?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I was seen immediately</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Under 15 minutes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 15 to 30 minutes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 30 to 60 minutes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 1 to 2 hours</p> <p><input type="radio"/> More than 2 hours</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I did not visit my local agency (Go to question 6)</p> <p>4. Before visiting your local agency this time, did you set up an appointment to see a local agency worker?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, I set up an appointment ahead of time</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No, I went to the local agency without making an appointment</p> | <p>5. How comfortable did you feel visiting local agency workers?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Very comfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Comfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Uncomfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Very uncomfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I have never seen local agency workers in person</p> <p>6. How comfortable did you feel talking on the phone with local agency workers?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Very comfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Comfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Uncomfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Very uncomfortable</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I have never talked to a local agency worker on the phone</p> <p>7. Local agency workers returned phone calls promptly.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I strongly agree</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I agree</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I disagree</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I strongly disagree</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I have never left a message for a local agency worker to call me back (Go to question 9)</p> |
|--|---|



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8. Usually, local agency workers returned phone calls:

- ☐ The same day
- ☐ The next day
- ☐ 2 to 5 days later
- ☐ More than a week later
- ☐ A local agency worker has never returned my phone calls

9. Agency staff treated me with respect.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree (Please print explanation below)

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10. If you needed to meet a local agency worker outside of regular business hours (Mon-Fri., 8 A.M. - 5 P.M.), how easy was it to arrange a meeting?

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Hard
- ☐ Very hard
- ☐ I did not need to meet outside of regular business hours

11. What language(s) do you speak at home?  
(Check all that apply)

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Hmong
- ☐ Laotian
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

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(Please Print)

12. If you needed help with translation when contacting local agency workers, how satisfied were you with the help you received?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ I needed help with translation but it was not offered
- ☐ I did not need translation services

13. Local agency workers clearly explained the FoodShare and health care benefits that were available to my family and me.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree
- ☐ I have never talked to a local agency worker

14. Local agency workers clearly explained what I needed to do to get benefits.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree
- ☐ I have never talked to a local agency worker

15. Written information given to me by local agency workers (like pamphlets and brochures) was easy to understand.

- ☐ I strongly agree
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I disagree
- ☐ I strongly disagree
- ☐ I have never received any written information from local agency workers

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16. How long did you have to wait between the time you applied for benefits and the time you were told if you would get benefits?

☐ Less than 1 week  
☐ Between 1 and 2 weeks  
☐ Between 2 and 3 weeks  
☐ Between 3 and 4 weeks  
☐ More than 4 weeks

17. Local agency workers clearly explained the fair hearing process to me (also called the appeals process).

☐ I strongly agree  
☐ I agree  
☐ I disagree  
☐ I strongly disagree  
☐ I'm not sure I heard about the fair hearing process  
☐ I have never talked to a local agency worker

18. Do you know who to contact if you have any questions about your benefits?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure

19. Have you ever wanted to talk to a supervisor or manager at your local agency?

☐ No  
☐ Yes (Please print explanation below)

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20. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with your local agency? (Please show your answer by filling in a circle below.)

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all							Very		
satisfied							Satisfied		

Please use the space below for any comments you have about your experience going to the local agency for services. (Please print.)

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Please use the space below for any suggestions you have that would improve customer service at this local agency. (Please print.)

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**Thank you! Please return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.**